



PEDIATRIC AND ADOLESCENT GYNECOLOGY

IUD Myths vs. Facts

There is a lot of information out there about intrauterine devices, or IUDs, that can be wrong and even harmful. Having the correct information about IUDs will help you make the best decision for you.

Note: This information is for the 8-year progestin IUD (Mirena or Liletta) which has medicine inside and is an excellent option to treat problem periods as well as for birth control. There are different types of IUDs, which are all safe and effective.

The myth

IUDs are dangerous.

The truth

IUDs are safe. They have been studied for decades in thousands of people all over the world and don't cause any long-term negative health effects. Doctors recommend the IUD for people with certain medical conditions (such as heart or blood problems), because it doesn't interact with medicines or other body systems.

IUDs cause infections.

Using an IUD doesn't increase the chance that you will get a sexually transmitted infection (STI). Just like with any medical procedure, there is a very small risk of infection right after the IUD is inserted.

IUDs cause infertility.

An IUD doesn't affect your ability to have a baby after it's taken out. In fact, when you have the IUD taken out, the birth control effect is gone right away, so be sure to use a different birth control method if you are sexually active and don't want to get pregnant.

Because an IUD works for 5-8 years, I must use it for that long.

You can have the IUD removed at any time. Your doctor takes the IUD out by pulling on the strings, and this can be done quickly during an office visit.

An IUD is only for people who have already had a baby.

It is safe to get an IUD if you have never been pregnant and/or never had a baby.

I'm too young to get an IUD.

There is no age that is too young to get an IUD. As long as you have had a menstrual period, it's safe to get an IUD.

If you've never had sex, you can't get an IUD.

In our office, many patients who get an IUD have never had sex before. The reason they get an IUD is to treat their problem periods, not birth control. We explain the entire process of getting an IUD beforehand and trust you to know if this is something that you would like to do.

It's too painful to get an IUD.

Pain is different for everyone, and some people think the IUD insertion is no big deal. Some think it feels like very painful menstrual cramps. Talk to your doctor about the procedure and let them know if you are concerned about pain. IUDs can also be put in under anesthesia.

It will feel weird to have an IUD.

Once the IUD is put in, you won't be able to feel it. There are strings or threads connected to the IUD that will be at the cervical opening, but you won't be able to feel them unless you check for them.

I will have to check my IUD strings.

You don't have to check your strings if you don't want to. One of the benefits about getting an IUD is once it's put in, you don't have to do anything.

I can't use tampons with an IUD.

It's safe to use tampons. A tampon sits inside the vagina and the IUD is in the uterus.

It's not safe for me to use the pill, so I can't use an IUD either.

An IUD is a safe method even for people who can't use other birth control methods. The IUD has progestin (not estrogen), and it doesn't interact with medicines or other body systems.

An IUD will make my periods worse.

The progestin IUD actually makes periods better. You will have less bleeding and less pain. About half of people have almost no periods after getting an IUD.

Learn more



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