# CHILWELL VALLEY AND MEADOWS PRACTICE

# INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS HAVING AN INTRAUTERINE CONTRACEPTIVE DEVICE (IUCD) FITTED

# AT THE VALLEY AND CHILWELL MEADOWS PRACTICE

Please read this leaflet together with the weblinks below for your chosen IUCD.

IUS (mirena): [Intrauterine System (IUS) | Contraception | Effectiveness & Side Effects | Patient](https://patient.info/sexual-health/long-acting-reversible-contraceptives-larc/intrauterine-system)

IUD (copper coil): [Intrauterine Contraceptive Device (IUCD) | Patient](https://patient.info/sexual-health/long-acting-reversible-contraceptives-larc/intrauterine-contraceptive-device)

This leaflet is for women who have decided on an IUCD and need more detailed information about what to expect.

# MIRENA, KYLEENA, JAYDESS OR COPPER IUCD?

There are four types of IUCD and you will need to decide, with your doctor, which is the best option for you. The copper in the **Copper IUD** works mainly to stop sperm reaching the egg. The **Mirena, Levosert, Kyleena and Jaydess** IUCD (sometimes also called IUS, or intrauterine system) works by releasing the hormone progesterone; this thickens the mucus to stop sperm getting though, makes the lining of the uterus very thin, and in some women stops the release of eggs each month. The **Jaydess** IUS has 13.5mg of progesterone, **Kyleena** 19.5mg of progesterone and **Mirena and Levosert** have 52mg progesterone in it. The more the progesterone the lighter the periods but the wider the diameter of the device. Women who have not had children and whose periods are not a problem may wish to consider the Kyleena or Jaydess. The Mirena and Levosert can also be used for the progestogen component of your HRT for 5 years.

**The Jaydess IUS will only provide contraception for three, the Kyleena IUS will do this for five years, the Levosert for six years and the Mirena for eight years.**

**The current copper IUDs we fit in the practice are called the T safe Cu 380A QL. This provides contraception for ten years. We also fit the Cu T 380 which provides contraception for 5 years.**

* Periods on the copper IUD tend to be a bit heavier and longer than your normal periods. On the Mirena, periods tend to become lighter, infrequent, and in about 30% of women stop altogether after a few months. In fact, the Mirena is now often used as treatment for women with heavy periods even if they do not require contraception.
* The copper IUD is the only very effective and reversible contraceptive method available that does not involve any hormones. The hormone in the Mirena, Levosert, Kyleena and Jaydess IUS acts locally on the uterus, but a very small amount may escape into your blood stream and may cause mild side effects like skin changes, breast tenderness and bloating. This tends to settle after the first three months or so. This is much less than any oral form of contraception.

# RISKS OF HAVING AN IUCD

Having an IUCD fitted is very safe. However, you do have to be aware of the following possibilities:

* About 1 in 20 IUCDs fall out after insertion. This commonly happens in the first few weeks after the fit, unusually after three months, but can happen at any time. It is worthwhile learning out how to feel your own IUCD threads so you can reassure yourself it is still there, particularly after a heavy period or any change in your bleeding pattern. If you have a copper IUD, as your bleeding pattern may be unchanged.
* IUCDs are very effective methods of contraception but no method is 100%, even sterilisation. There is a very small risk of pregnancy with a IUCD (less than one in a hundred).
* In the rare event of a pregnancy with a IUCD in place, there is a higher risk that the pregnancy will be an ectopic pregnancy (outside the uterus in the fallopian tube) because of the IUCD in the uterus. This means if you cannot feel your threads, your bleeding pattern changes unexpectedly and you experience unusual period cramps with an IUCD in place it is important that you do a pregnancy test early.
* If there is any sexually transmitted infection in your vagina at the time of the fit, there is a chance that this could be pushed higher up causing pelvic inflammatory disease. We do offer all patients a chlamydia screen at the time of the IUCD fitting. However, if you think you could be at risk of infection (for example, you have had a new partner in the last 3 months, are under 25 years old, or have an unusual vaginal discharge) it would be a good idea to discuss this with us at least two weeks before your fitting date so we can arrange for you to do a self-taken swab and you can be treated if necessary prior to the IUCD fitting.
* Very rarely (less than one in a thousand IUCD fits), a small hole is made in the uterus during the fit. If this occurs, the IUCD fiting is stopped and the hole is allowed to heal over. Even more rarely, if the doctor is not aware this has happened, as it might not cause pain, the IUCD is fitted and ends up outside the uterus. This may only be discovered later by missing IUCD threads. This would need a laparoscopic operation (keyhole surgery) to remove the IUCD. There is no permanent medical damage from this.
* Occasionally it is simply not possible to get a IUCD in. This is more likely if you have not had any children born vaginally (as your cervix is narrower) or if you have had any treatment to your cervix, which can cause scarring. If we are unable to fit an IUCD at our surgery and you are still keen to go ahead, we can refer you for a specialist IUCD fitting appointment at the contraception and sexual health clinic at the Victoria Health Centre on Glass House Street in town. This is an alternative place to have a IUCD fit.
* Occasionally when it comes to removing the IUCD, the threads are nor visible because the IUCD has shifted upwards slightly within the uterus, or the threads have become tucked up inside the cervix. In this situation we refer you for an ultrasound to check the position of the IUCD, and you may need to attend the Contraception and sexual health clinic for its removal.

# BEFORE YOUR IUCD FIT

* Make sure you understand the risks and benefits of having an IUCD (see above) and ask the doctor anything you are not sure of.
* Please arrange some childcare if needed, we want you on your own for at least half an hour.
* Take some painkillers e.g. 2 paracetamol (1g) and/or 400mg ibuprofen about 1 hour before your appointment.
* It is normally best to have eaten beforehand to avoid feeling faint.
* You must not be pregnant at the time of the IUCD fitting; you will therefore be asked to abstain from sexual intercourse from your last period or continue reliable contraception prior to the IUCD fit. You may also be asked to provide a urine sample for a pregnancy test before the fit if there is any uncertainty. **If there is any possibility that you could be pregnant, we are not allowed to fit an IUCD**.
* It is often best to overlap contraceptive methods (e.g. if you are using the pill, finish off your pack before relying on the IUCD). If in doubt about this, discuss with the doctor before your fitting date.

# PATIENTS ATTENDING FOR A IUCD CHANGE

# For those women who are already using an IUCD for contraception and are attending for a IUCD change, it is VERY important that you avoid unprotected sexual intercourse by abstaining from sexual intercourse for one week prior to your appointment.

This is because occasionally when we remove an IUCD the cervix (neck of the womb) tightens up and we may not be able to get the new IUCD in place immediately. If this happens we will bring you back on another occasion to have the new coil fitted but you could get pregnant if you have had intercourse in the week before the coil was removed.

# THE FITTING PROCEDURE

* There will be a trained doctor and a trained nurse or health care assistant present throughout the procedure. If you would also like to bring a relative or friend with you to be present, please let us know beforehand.
* First you will have an internal examination to determine which direction your uterus is lying (this varies from woman to woman).
* The first bit of the fit feels a bit like having a smear test; a speculum is inserted, the cervix may be cleaned with cotton wool and water and some local anaesthetic gel is squirted onto the cervix and into the canal. (No needle is used).
* We use an instrument to hold the cervix still; you may feel a brief pinch when this is clipped onto the cervix.
* The uterus size is then measured with a fine plastic instrument, and the IUCD is fitted. This can sometimes cause a bit of crampy period type pain.
* The IUCD has fine threads that hang down through the cervix into the vagina so the IUCD can be removed by a doctor when desired. We trim the threads of the IUD with scissors so that you are not aware of them inside you.
* After the IUCD fit, we may ask you to wait in the surgery (e.g., sit in the waiting room) for 30 minutes or so. This is because sometimes the procedure makes some women feel a bit faint afterwards and we want to make sure you are OK before heading home. If you are concerned this may happen to you it might be an idea to arrange someone to collect you from the surgery.

# AFTERCARE IN THE FIRST FEW WEEKS

* You may well have some period pains and bleeding for a few days after the IUCD fit because of the procedure and the IUCD settling in.
* If you feel unwell, the bleeding or tummy pains haven’t settled after the first week, or you have a smelly discharge in the first 3 weeks after fitting, make an urgent appointment with a doctor, preferably the one who fitted your IUCD.
* It is best to allow the IUCD a week to settle in before having sexual intercourse. This also reduces the risk of infection.
* **IF YOUR IUCD WAS NOT FITTED ON A PERIOD IT WILL NOT BE WORKING AS A CONTRACEPTION FOR THE FIRST WEEK.**
* Avoid using tampons or a moon cup until after your six-week check. This is to avoid pulling the dry IUCD threads out.
* You need to come back 6 weeks after the IUCD fit for an examination to make sure everything is OK and the IUCD is still in the right place. This can be with a trained nurse or doctor of your choice at your own surgery site.
* Your partner may feel the threads the first time you have intercourse, but this should not be uncomfortable. The threads become like soft cotton and usually get tucked up behind the cervix out of the way.

## LONG TERM AFTERCARE

* After the six week check we don’t need to see you again unless you are getting any problems. We will check your threads are present when you come for your smear test.
* You are advised to check the IUCD threads each month (e.g., after each period) especially with a copper IUD as the periods may look the same. We can explain how to do this at the six-week check and the family planning leaflet also has a useful picture to help.
* We will give you a record card at the IUCD fitting. Please keep a note of when your IUCD was fitted. **The Mirena and Levosert last 6 years for contraception (5 years if you are using it for your HRT), the Kyleena lasts 5 years and Jaydess for 3 years.** **After this time the IUS will not be working as a contraception even if it is still inside you**. **WE ARE NOT ABLE TO SEND YOU A REMINDER WHEN THIS HAPPENS AND IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO ARRANGE FURTHER CONTRACEPTION IF NEEDED.** If you are still happy with the method and would like the IUS replacing please let us know at least 3 months before the present IUS expires so we can put you on the waiting list for this to be done in time.
* If you are over 40 years old at the time of fitting with a copper IUD, or over 45 years with a Mirena you may not need any further IUCD fittings. Please discuss this with your doctor.
* No contraception is required after the age of 55 years and any device can be safely removed then.
* If at any time you are not happy with the method or would like to try for a baby make a routine appointment with any doctor to have your IUCD removed (it is best to abstain from sexual intercourse for 1 week before IUCD removal to ensure you don’t become pregnant immediately after it is removed). As soon as the device is removed you can get pregnant.
* Remember, the IUCD does NOT protect you against any sexually transmitted infections so if you are under 25 years or have changed partner use a condom as well.

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