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After coil fitting: What to expect

Information for women

Grampian Sexual Health Service

Will I feel uncomfortable?

Most women have crampy discomfort for two to three days after a coil fitting or change. A few women may have cramps for a week or two.

Over-the-counter pain killers such as ibuprofen or paracetamol can be taken if needed. Take what you would usually use for period pain bearing in mind any allergies or other medical conditions.

Local warmth from a hot water bottle or heat pad might help.

How soon can I rely on my coil for contraception?

This depends on the type of coil and when in your cycle it was fitted. Sometimes it will be effective straightaway. Sometimes other contraception must be used carefully for another seven days AND a pregnancy test done after 4 weeks.

This would usually have been discussed before you left clinic after the coil fitting. Contact the clinic if you are unsure.

What bleeding should I expect after a copper coil is fitted?

Periods are often heavier, longer and more crampy than natural with a copper coil.

This may get better after 2 to 3 months.

Some women get light bleeding in between periods - particularly in the first 2 to 3 months.

Painkillers such as ibuprofen or paracetamol may be helpful.

A non-hormonal tablet called tranexamic acid that can be taken during heavy bleeding to make it lighter. It is not suitable for all women and would be prescribed by your GP.

If bleeding with the copper coil is a problem but you like the coil as a contraceptive method you may want to change to one of the hormone containing coils.

What bleeding should I expect after the Mirena™ hormone coil is fitted?

It is common to have unpredictable red or dark brown bleeding lighter than a period almost every day for two months and maybe for as long as four months. Some women will have almost no bleeding after the Mirena™ is fitted.

A dark brown “stringy” discharge is also common as the Mirena™ begins to work and does not mean that there is infection.

Almost everyone with a Mirena™ finds that their periods are much lighter after four months so give it this time to settle if you can. Around 83 in 100 women will have infrequent or no periods by 1 year.

You can record bleeding on the calendar chart on the back page of the Mirena™ booklet.

The Mirena releases a small amount of hormone into the bloodstream - the same as 3 progestogen only pills a week. Slightly more hormone is released in the first 6 to 8 weeks after it is fitted. Hormone side effects such as headaches, oily skin or mood change are rare and may settle within 8 weeks.

What should I expect after the Kyleena™ hormone coil is fitted?

There may be light irregular bleeding for the first two to three months. After that most women will get a “normal” period most months. Around 36 in every 100 women will have infrequent or no periods by 1 year.

Kyleena™ releases a lower amount of hormone into the bloodstream - the same as 2 progestogen only pills a week. Slightly more hormone is released in the first 6 to 8 weeks after it is fitted.

What bleeding should I expect after the Jaydess™ hormone coil is fitted?

There may be light irregular bleeding for the first two to three months. After that most women will get a “normal” period most months. Around 28 in every 100 women will have infrequent or no periods by 1 year.

Jaydess™ releases the lowest amount of hormone into the bloodstream – the same as 1 progestogen only pill a week. Slightly more hormone is released in the first 6 to 8 weeks after it is fitted.

Can I use tampons?

Tampons can be used if there is normal or heavy bleeding. If the bleeding is very light it is better to use panty liners rather than tampons as there is a risk of pulling the coil out on a 'dry tampon'.

Can I use a menstrual cup?

Yes, but take care not to pull the coil threads when using the cup

When should I get medical advice?

Get medical advice if you are too uncomfortable to carry on with normal activities even though you are taking regular painkillers.

Also seek advice if you have a fever, smelly discharge or increasing pelvic discomfort. This could be a sign of infection. Suspected infection is usually treated with antibiotics. The coil would not have to come out unless you still had symptoms after two or three days of antibiotics.

Contact the clinic where you had the coil fitted.

Contact NHS24 for out of hours advice on 111.

You may need to be examined and have a pregnancy test, tests for infection and maybe an ultrasound scan.

Do I need to check my coil?

Check that you can feel your coil threads after 4 to 6 weeks and then after a period or other bleeding. You will have been shown the threads on a model coil and advised how to check them.

There is more information about this in the FPA Your Guide to the IUD or IUS leaflet or the website www.fpa.org.uk.

If you cannot feel your threads or they seem much longer than usual or if you can feel the plastic stalk arrange an appointment with your GP or at the clinic to have an examination, and perhaps a scan, to make sure that the coil is still in place.

Use condoms or avoid intercourse until you know that the coil is in the correct position.

No routine coil check is needed if all is well and you can feel your threads.

Will you contact me when my coil needs changed?

The Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) clinic will usually contact your GP and give you a card or leaflet when your coil is fitted which says when the coil needs to be changed. We **do not** try to contact you when the coil is due a change.

Some GP practices send a reminder - others rely on you to get in contact when a change is due.

This leaflet is also available in large print. Other formats and languages can be supplied on request. Please call Quality Development on 01224 554149 for a copy. Ask for leaflet 1667.

Feedback from the public helped us to develop this leaflet. If you have any comments on how we can improve it, please call 01224 554149 to let us know.