

## Quick facts



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### PEDIATRIC AND ADOLESCENT GYNECOLOGY

## Getting an Intrauterine Device (IUD) to Help with Periods

*Interested in managing your heavy or painful periods with an intrauterine device (IUD)? Let us answer your questions about what you can expect during and after your visit — and how an IUD can help improve your heavy menstrual bleeding.*

### What is a levonorgestrel IUD?

- An IUD is a small, t-shaped device that sits inside the uterus and releases a small amount of the hormone progestin.
- Progestin helps keep the lining of the uterus thin and healthy. This means periods will be lighter and some people will have no periods at all. It's safe to skip your period when using this type of IUD.
- An IUD is an effective treatment for pelvic pain, cramps and heavy periods.
- An IUD also prevents pregnancy because it blocks sperm from reaching an egg. An IUD is a very good method of birth control.
- There are several different IUDs. The most effective IUD for management of cramps and heavy periods works for 8 years. After this, you can have a new one put in or choose to leave the IUD out. The IUD can also be taken out sooner at any time if needed.



Watch this video to learn more about IUDs.

## How does the IUD get put in?

The first step is a pelvic exam. This is where your doctor will feel inside the vagina to tell the size and position of the uterus. Then a speculum (metal device that spreads open the vaginal walls) is placed into the vagina to help the doctor see the opening to the uterus, called the cervix. Next, the IUD is placed through the cervix and inside the uterus.

## How can I get an IUD?

You need to see a doctor to put in and take out the IUD.

Most people get an IUD during a clinic visit. For some, the doctor may recommend having the procedure done under anesthesia for medical reasons. Talk with your doctor for more information.

## Does getting an IUD hurt?

Almost everyone has some cramping when they get an IUD. Sometimes the cramps are like menstrual cramps during a period and sometimes they are much stronger. The cramps can last for a few minutes or hours. Sometimes there is cramping for days or weeks after getting an IUD.

## Can I take pain medicine before getting an IUD?

We recommend that you take a pain medicine like ibuprofen (Advil/Motrin) at least 30 minutes before your appointment. Talk to your doctor if you are worried about pain with the procedure.

## What should I expect right after getting an IUD?

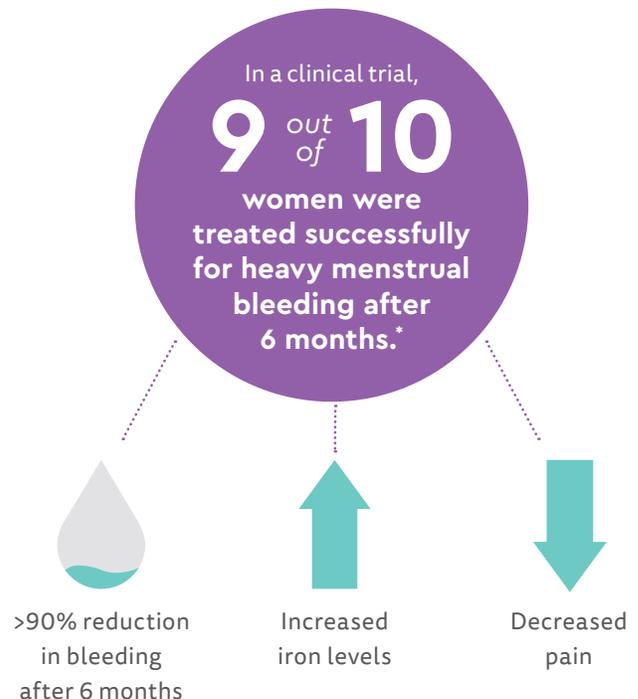
- Some people will have cramping and bleeding, and others will have no symptoms at all.
- Cramping may be very light or like bad menstrual cramps. We recommend using a heating pad and (if safe) 600 mg of ibuprofen (Advil/Motrin) every 6 hours.
- Bleeding may be light or like a menstrual period. You can use pads and/or tampons for coverage.
- Plan on having a relaxed schedule the day of your appointment. Rest is important.

## What should I expect in the 3–6 months after getting an IUD?

- Cramping should get much better and less frequent.
- Bleeding is different for everyone. Some people will have no bleeding, while some will have spotting and brown discharge almost every day for 3-6 months.

## What will happen to my period after getting an IUD?

Over time, almost everyone will have lighter periods after getting an IUD. About 90% of people with IUDs will see fewer or no periods after 6 months. People with IUDs may also have an increase in their blood count (hemoglobin) and iron (ferritin) levels.



\*Source: Heavy Period Treatment. Mirena US. <https://www.mirena-us.com/heavyperiod-treatment>.

## Can I still use other period treatments after getting an IUD?

Talk to your doctor about whether you should keep using the pill, patch, ring or other medicine to treat your periods after getting an IUD. The answer is different for every person.

## What do I need to know if I'm using a levonorgestrel IUD for birth control?

- Wait 1 week (7 days) after the IUD is put in to have sex. If you are using another birth control method before getting the IUD (such as the pill, patch or ring) stay on this method for at least 7 days after getting an IUD.
- Neither you nor your partner should be able to tell the IUD is there. Please call us if you have any concerns.
- The IUD does not protect against sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Get tested regularly and use condoms every time to prevent STIs.

## Are there any serious side effects of the levonorgestrel IUD?

- The IUD is a safe option to manage periods and for birth control. The medicine in the IUD works inside the uterus and does not affect the entire body.
- There is a very small chance of pelvic infection during the first 20 days after IUD insertion. There is no increased chance of pelvic infection after this time. There is a small chance of expulsion which means that the IUD gets pushed out of the uterus. A "partial expulsion" is when the IUD gets pushed into the lower part of the uterus. When this happens, the IUD is removed and a new one can be placed.
- Uterine perforation is a very uncommon risk. This is when the IUD goes through or into the wall of the uterus. When this occurs, an additional procedure may be needed to remove the IUD.

## When to call your provider:

Please call us if you have fever or chills, severe pain, cramping or increased bleeding.

Please call us if you think you might be pregnant. There is a very small risk of pregnancy even with the IUD in place.

You can call us anytime for any reason:  
**720-777-2667**

## Learn more



[childrenscolorado.org/Gyn](https://childrenscolorado.org/Gyn)



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