

### What is an IUD?

An IUD (intrauterine device) is a form of contraception that is inserted into the uterus. There are two types of IUDs:

- the hormonal IUD (Mirena) - a small plastic T-shaped device that contains progesterone
- the copper IUD - a small plastic device with copper wire wrapped around it

An IUD can usually be removed easily by a doctor or nurse. Both types of IUDs are removed the same way.

For more information about IUDs please see our other factsheets.

### When does my IUD need to be removed?

IUDs usually need to be replaced every 5 or 10 years depending on the type of IUD you have and the age you were when it was put in. Ask your doctor for advice about when your IUD needs to be replaced. You can also choose to have your IUD removed at any time if you want to become pregnant or if you don't want it anymore.

When it is time to have your IUD removed, you have 2 options.

#### OPTION 1: If you want to become pregnant

- You can have your IUD removed at any time and your normal fertility returns straight away.
- It is a good idea to talk to a health care professional about things you should do before you get pregnant like starting folic acid and checking your immunisations are up to date.
  - This is best done one month before you get your IUD removed.

#### OPTION 2: If you do not want to become pregnant

- It is possible to have a new IUD put in immediately after the other one is taken out - ask your doctor for advice.
- If you are not having a new IUD immediately, you should start using another form of contraception 7 days before removal.
- It is best to have your IUD removed when:
  - it is the first few days (days 1 to 3) of your period
  - you have not had sex in the 7 days before you want to remove the IUD
  - you have used another method of contraception for the 7 days before

### Where can I go to get my IUD removed?

You can go to a Family Planning NSW clinic, some general practices and some women's health centres to have an IUD removed. The IUD is taken out by a doctor or nurse who has been trained in this procedure.

### How is my IUD removed?

The IUDs available in Australia have a thread so that they can be easily removed. The doctor or nurse will look inside your vagina using a speculum. This is like having a Cervical Screening Test done. The doctor or nurse will use a long pair of forceps to gently pull on the thread to remove the IUD. It only takes a couple of minutes. Some women find it a little uncomfortable and others don't feel much at all. You should not feel unwell after the removal.

There are many different types of IUDs available in other countries. It is important to tell your doctor or nurse if your IUD was inserted in another country. Depending on the type of IUD you have, they may need to refer you to a gynaecologist to have it removed.

#### For more information

##### Family Planning NSW Talkline –

[www.fpnsw.org.au/talkline](http://www.fpnsw.org.au/talkline) or 1300 658 886

##### National Relay Service (for deaf people) – 13 36 77

##### TIS National's interpreting service – 131 450

##### Family Planning NSW factsheet – [Pre-pregnancy planning](#)

##### Family Planning NSW factsheet – [Hormonal IUD](#)

##### Family Planning NSW factsheet – [Copper IUD](#)

##### Visit your nearest Family Planning NSW clinic – [www.fpnsw.org.au/clinics](http://www.fpnsw.org.au/clinics)