

Getting Started With Your **Levonorgestrel IUS (Mirena)** - A type of Intrauterine Device (IUD)

★ **What do I need to know about the Levonorgestrel IUS?**

- ✓ A few important things to know about the Levonorgestrel IUS:
 - You need to see a health provider for insertion and removal.
 - It works for 5 years. After 5 years, it should be removed (and you can have a new one placed if desired).
 - **Expect to have a change in your menstrual bleeding:** most women will have **lighter periods or no periods** after the first 6-12 months of use.

★ **What can I expect when I have a Levonorgestrel IUD?**

- ✓ **In the first 1- 5 days:** Some women have some cramps, pain, and bleeding after getting an IUD and some women have no symptoms at all. If you are having cramping: apply a hot pad or warm water bottle over you lower abdomen, and (if OK for you to take) use Ibuprofen 600mg every 6 hours as needed. It is OK to wear pads or tampons if you are having bleeding.

Please your health provider immediately if you have:

•fever or chills •severe abdominal pain •severe cramping and/or increasing bleeding

There is a very small increased risk of pelvic infection during the first 21 days (3 weeks) of receiving an IUD, so it is important to stay aware of these precautions during this time. There is also a very small risk of uterine perforation (the IUD going into the wall of the uterus), and failure of the IUD resulting in a pregnancy which could be in your tubes (ectopic).

These are very rare complications but it is important for you to contact your clinic with any concerning problems.

- ✓ **Over the first 3-6 months:** You may have irregular bleeding. You may have light bleeding or spotting (very light bleeding or brownish discharge) almost every day. After the 3rd month, your periods may start to get very light. It may take up to 6 months until the frequent bleeding and spotting goes away. It is important to remember that this is an expected side effect during the first 3-6 months of use.
- ✓ **After 6 months of use:** **Most women will be having lighter periods, less frequent if any spotting, and maybe no bleeding at all.** After 1 year of use, 1 out of 5 women (20%) of women will have **no period at all.** The chance that you will have no periods becomes more likely over time.

★ **Is it really safe to have lighter or even no periods at all?**

- ✓ **YES.** The IUD contains a very small amount of progestin hormone that is released into the uterus. This hormone keeps the lining of the uterus very thin- and so there is nothing there to bleed.

★ **What about “the strings”?**

- ✓ There are very small and thin strings or threads that are attached to the IUD. These threads sit at the very top of the vagina and can be difficult for you to feel. The best way to check that the IUD is in place is to feel for these strings each month, and even before having sexual intercourse. If you are able to feel for the strings, then this will be a great way for you to check that the IUD is positioned correctly. If you cannot feel the strings, this may be OK, but discuss this with your health provider.

★ **When is it safe to have sex? Will the IUD interfere with sex?**

- ✓ Wait 5 days after the IUD is inserted to have unprotected sex. The IUD will then be very effective in preventing pregnancy.
- ✓ Neither you nor your partner should be able to feel the IUD. Call your health provider if you have concerns.
- ✓ **The IUD does not protect against STDs; use condoms to prevent STDs including HIV.**

★ **When do I need to have the IUD removed?**

- ✓ The Levonorgestrel IUS is very effective for the full 5 years of its use.
- ✓ Your IUD needs to be removed (and it can be replaced with a new one) in 5 years, or ___/___.
- ✓ As soon as the IUD is removed, your fertility (your ability to get pregnant) will return. If you are not planning a pregnancy it is important that you continue to use birth control. If you are planning a pregnancy, it is important to take Folic Acid 800 mcg or a Prenatal Vitamin for the 3 months before the IUD is removed.