Insertion of intrauterine contraception (coil)

Please note duration of coil use for contraception: There are a number of different hormonal coils. Each one lasts for a different length of time and this is kept under review, so it is really important you know the name of the one you have.

The duration of use for contraception for Mirena, Levosert and Benilexa has recently changed to 8 years. In 2024 the duration of use for Kyleena is 5 years and Jaydess is 3 years. For copper coils, most are 10 years but a few are 5 years.

If you currently have a Mirena (or Levosert or Benilexa) device and this was inserted when you were aged 45 or older, then it will continue to provide contraception until age 55.

If you have a copper coil that was inserted when you were aged 40 or older, then it will continue to provide contraception until age 55.

Contraception is not required after age 55.

Contraception prior to your appointment

There must be no risk of pregnancy at your appointment. If you could be pregnant, we may have to rearrange your appointment for another day.
To ensure we can insert your coil, you should:

- Continue using a hormonal method of contraception correctly (pill, patch, injection or implant) until the day of your appointment, **or**
- Use condoms on every occasion you have sex for at least three weeks before your appointment, **or**
- Do not have sex for three weeks before your appointment

If you are replacing a coil which is not out of date, please do not have sex for 7 days before your appointment.

If you already have a coil fitted and it is out of date you need to use alternative contraception (as above) or not have sex for 21 days before your appointment.

On the day of your appointment

Please make sure that you have something to eat before your appointment. The fitting process can be uncomfortable, please take a painkiller such as paracetamol or ibuprofen about 60 minutes before your appointment. We will provide sanitary towels.

It is OK to have a coil fitted if you are on your period; please attend your appointment as usual.

What will happen at your coil appointment:

The appointment is for half an hour; the actual fitting procedure normally takes about 5 -10 minutes. There will be a doctor or nurse who is fitting the coil, and there will be an assistant in the room. You will be offered sexually transmitted infection (STI) testing at the time of your coil fitting.

Before your coil is fitted, you will have an internal vaginal examination to check the position and size of your womb.

A speculum is passed into your vagina, like during cervical screening (a smear test), and the coil is inserted through the cervix into the womb. The coil has threads which hang through the cervix (opening of the uterus) into the top of your vagina. Once the coil has been inserted, we will teach you how to feel the threads to make sure the coil is still in place.

Having a coil fitted can be uncomfortable, and some people find it painful, but we can use local anaesthetic applied to your cervix to help. You can ask us to stop the procedure at any time.

You may feel nauseous or faint afterwards. While this is not dangerous or serious, if it does happen a friend or family member should ideally accompany you home.

After your appointment

You may experience some lower abdominal cramping, similar to period pain, and vaginal bleeding. This may last a few hours, and in some cases, it may continue for a few days. Painkillers (paracetamol or ibuprofen) can help. If these symptoms worsen after this time, or do not improve, please contact the clinic for advice.

What are the possible risks associated with your coil fitting?

Pelvic infections
There's a small chance of getting a pelvic (womb) infection in the first three weeks after the coil has been inserted. You will be offered a sexual health screen at your appointment.

Expulsion
There's a 1 in 20 chance of coil expulsion (coil falling out) after fitting. The coil can also move (displacement) both upwards and downwards in your womb over time. You may not know the coil has been expelled or displaced. This is why it is important to feel the coil threads regularly, so you know the coil still is in place.

Damage to the womb
There's a very small risk (1-2 in 1000) that the coil can make a hole in the womb (perforation) when it's fitted. The risk is higher if you've recently given birth or are breastfeeding. This may cause pain but often there are no symptoms. Although some perforations are identified at the time of insertion, there can be a delay before perforation is identified. You may need surgery to remove the coil.

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Failure rate
There is a very small chance of contraception failure. This is less than one in 100 people but could result in a pregnancy.

Ectopic pregnancy
You're unlikely to become pregnant while using a coil but if you do, there's a small risk of an ectopic pregnancy (pregnancy occurring outside the womb).

Lost coil threads
In about 1 in 5 people coil threads cannot be felt or seen. This may be because of coil expulsion, displacement, perforation or pregnancy, or the coil being in the right place but with threads drawn up into the cervical canal or womb.

If you cannot feel the threads, or if you can feel the coil itself, please use an alternative method of contraception such as condoms or avoid sex as you may not be protected from pregnancy and seek advice as soon as possible. You may need emergency contraception.

For further information about the copper coil and hormonal coil, please see:

- https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/contraception/iud-coil/
- https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/contraception/ius-intrauterine-system/

If you cannot make your appointment

Please call us on 0300 303 2880. If you are late for your appointment, it may not be possible to see you and we may need to reschedule your appointment for another day.
Please visit www.sexualhealthbucks.nhs.uk for clinic opening times.

Please remember that this leaflet is intended as general information only. We aim to make the information as up to date and accurate as possible, but please note that it is subject to change. Please therefore always check specific advice on any concerns you may have with your doctor.

How can I help reduce healthcare associated infections?

Keeping your hands clean is an effective way of preventing the spread of infections. Please follow our infection prevention and control guidelines when visiting our healthcare sites. Further information is available on our website.

Patient Advice Sheet

If you would like a copy of this information on audiotape, in large print or translated, please call the Patient Advice Liaison Service on 01296 831120 or email bht.pals@nhs.net

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