

**UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON  
DEPARTMENT OF OBSTETRICS AND GYNECOLOGY**

**IUD AFTERCARE INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Uterine cramping is common after IUD placement. You can help relieve the discomfort with heating pads, Tylenol (acetaminophen), Aspirin or Advil (ibuprofen). If your cramping becomes very painful, please call the clinic.
2. Irregular bleeding and spotting is normal for the first few months after the IUD is placed. In some cases, women may experience irregular bleeding or spotting for up to six months after the IUD is placed. This bleeding can be annoying at first but usually will become lighter with the Mirena IUD quickly. Call the clinic if your bleeding is excessive and not getting better.
3. Your period will likely be shorter and lighter with a Mirena IUD. Approximately 40% of women will stop having periods altogether with the Mirena IUD. Your period may be heavier and longer with the Paragard IUD.
4. IUDs do not protect against sexually transmitted infections including the AIDS virus (HIV), warts (HPV), gonorrhea, Chlamydia, and herpes. Condoms should be used to decrease the risk sexually transmitted infections. If you think that you have been exposed to a sexually transmitted infection, please call the clinic.
5. If you had the IUD placed for birth control, the Paragard IUD is effective immediately. The Mirena IUD is effective immediately if it was inserted within seven days after the start of your period. If you have Mirena inserted at any other time during your menstrual cycle, use another method of birth control, like condoms for at least 7 days.
6. It is possible for the IUD to come out of the uterus. If it does slip out of place, it is most likely to happen in the first few months after being put in. To make sure your IUD is in place, you can feel for the IUD strings between periods. To check for strings, wash your hands. Then, sit or squat down. Place one finger into your vagina until you feel your cervix. It will feel hard and rubbery, like the end of your nose. The string ends should be coming through your cervix. Do not pull on the strings. If the strings feel much longer than before, if you feel the hard plastic part of the IUD, or if you cannot feel the strings at all, the IUD may have moved out of place. Please call the clinic and consider using a back up form of birth control until you are seen.
7. Keep your follow-up appointment for 4-6 weeks after the IUD has been placed.

8. Pregnancy is unlikely after IUD placement, but can happen. If you have early pregnancy symptoms like nausea and vomiting, breast tenderness, frequent urination or abdominal pain, you can take a pregnancy test. Please call the clinic if you have any concerns or if your pregnancy test is positive.
9. The IUD should only be removed by a healthcare provider.
  - a. The Mirena IUD should be removed and/or replaced after 5 years.
  - b. The Paragard IUD should be removed and/or replaced after 10 years.

### **Warning Signs**

Call the clinic if any of the following occurs:

- Severe abdominal pain or cramping
- Unusual bleeding
- Fever or chills
- Foul smelling vaginal discharge
- Painful intercourse
- Positive pregnancy test.