

IUD REMOVAL

The removal of an IUD is usually easier, much less painful and quicker than the insertion. To minimize the discomfort, you could take ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) 600 mg or Naproxen (Aleve 440 mg) approximately 1 hour before the procedure, with some food.

In over 90% of women, it takes less than 1 minute. After inserting the speculum and visualizing the cervix, the strings are held steady with a special clamp, then the IUD is brought down. The IUD arms bend upwards as it comes down and the whole IUD is removed. You may feel some discomfort when it is coming out through the cervix.

If the strings are not visible, a pelvic ultrasound is performed to confirm that the IUD is in the uterus. If the strings are visible on the ultrasound and they are in the cervix, they can sometimes be teased out as they are basically curled up in the cervical canal. There are also narrow clamps that can be placed in the cervix to help with the removal.

If the strings are retracted inside the uterus, a cervical block may need to be given to allow the passage of a longer clamp (or IUD hook) to get hold of the strings, or even the bottom part of the IUD.

Although 85-90% of women are happy with their IUDs, here are several reasons why you may want it removed if:

- Want to become pregnant
- Need to replace it (a new one can be inserted at the same time)
- Continual side effects that you can no longer tolerate (hormonal, pain, bleeding)
- Do not need it anymore (i.e.: over 50 years of age, husband had a vasectomy)
- Some women may just not like it, it doesn't meet their expectations
- Very rarely, the development of an infection or an unintentional pregnancy

If you want to become pregnant, the IUD should be removed between 1-2 months before you want to start trying. You should take folic acid 1 mg (higher doses in selected cases) 3 months before you attempt to get pregnant. Folic acid helps decrease the chance of the baby getting spina bifida. If you have a medical condition such as diabetes, epilepsy or high blood pressure, it should be well controlled prior to the removal, and you should be on the safest medications for pregnancy.

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