



The copper IUD

What does a copper IUD look like?

A copper IUD is made of a flexible plastic in the shape of a T. The long side is wrapped with a thin copper or gold wire. The short arms prevent the IUD from slipping down in the uterus. At the end of the IUD there is the retrieval ribbon.

How does the copper IUD work?

Small amounts of copper ions or gold ions are regularly released from the copper or gold wrapping, which provide the pregnancy-preventing effect. This significantly reduces the ability of the sperm cells to fertilize. The tiny amounts are harmless to the body. They also do not affect the hormonal balance.

A copper IUD is a hormone-free contraceptive.

How safe is the copper IUD?

Widespread international studies prove that copper IUDs are both safe and effective over the long term. They are also widely recognized as being among the safest forms of contraception known.

Once the copper IUD has been inserted, you are protected against pregnancy.

The effectiveness of copper IUDs is high and comparable to that of contraceptive pills. It cannot be forgotten and only works within the uterus. The normal cycle is not changed.

How long does contraceptive protection with a copper IUD last?

A copper IUD is effective for 5 years. Larger models also for 10 years.



How is the copper IUD used?

Before insertion, a gynecological examination and sonographic examination of the pelvis and a cervical swab are carried out. Existing pregnancy, abdominal diseases and sexually transmitted diseases have also to be ruled out.

In addition, the size of the uterus has to be measured in advance and it has to be checked whether an IUD can be inserted at all. It is optimal to place the IUD during your period, but it is not a must. In principle, a copper IUD can also be used by young women.

A check-up should be carried out 4 weeks after insertion or at the latest after the first menstruation. Thereafter, we recommend to perform a check-up every six months.

When can I have a copper IUD inserted after childbirth?

An IUD should not be placed before six weeks after childbirth and not before 12 weeks after a cesarean section, as this increases the possibility of perforation or expulsion.

How is the copper IUD removed?

The copper IUD is removed by carefully pulling on the retrieval threads under sonographic control. If the threads are not visible and the IUD is in the uterine cavity, removal may need to be postponed until after the next menstrual period, as the threads usually become visible again immediately after the menstrual period. If the threads are still not visible, the IUD can be removed using a small instrument. After removal, the normal ability to conceive returns immediately.

If you have decided to continue using an IUD for contraception, a new IUD can be inserted at the same time as the removal.

How can I check whether the IUD is still seated correctly?

You can use the return ribbon to feel whether the IUD is still there. If you do not feel the threads during your self-examination or if you feel the



IUD itself in addition to the threads, please see your doctor immediately. It is likely that the IUD is no longer positioned correctly in the uterus, highly increasing the chance of pregnancy.

If you have any doubts about the correct position of the IUD, please contact your doctor.

A sonographic examination should also be carried out if the IUD suddenly causes symptoms.

Possible complications and precautions

You should see your doctor immediately if:

- You cannot feel the retrieval cords of the IUD
- You or your partner can feel the bottom of the IUD
- You think you are pregnant
- You have abdominal pain, fever or smelling discharge
- You or your partner experience pain or discomfort during intercourse
- Your period starts late. Please then take a pregnancy test.
- the IUD is to be removed and/or you want to become pregnant.

There have been isolated reports of IUD expulsion in women who use a menstrual cup. There is a possibility of suction, which can affect the IUD if the menstrual cup is not removed correctly. Please ask your doctor about the correct use of the menstrual cup. Tampons can still be used.

If you have severe period pain or heavy bleeding, we should talk about choosing a copper IUD. A copper IUD might worsen the symptoms.

Interactions

Previous experience with copper IUDs shows that, in general, it is highly unlikely that other medications will affect the contraceptive effect. However, published reports indicate reduced effectiveness with long-term use of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (particularly Acetylsalicylic acid (Aspirin ®, Ibuprofen, etc.) and corticosteroids (cortisone). Short-term use of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs do not appear to affect contraceptive effectiveness. Let's talk about it.