



Long Acting Reversible Contraceptives: Factsheet

What is Long Acting Reversible Contraception (LARC)?

LARCs are a form of birth control that lasts an extended period of time. LARCs are highly effective at preventing pregnancy. If a woman decides she wants to become pregnant, the LARC can be removed, and she can become pregnant again. There are two different types of LARCs: Intrauterine Devices (IUDs) and the Implant.

LARCs (like all birth control) should be free to women who have health insurance.

LARCs should not require you to pay anything toward your deductible and should not require a copayment or coinsurance costs to be paid. If you are being required to pay for contraception, please contact the Southwest Women's Law Center for assistance.

Facts about LARCs

- LARCs are highly effective at preventing pregnancy. In fact, a LARC is as effective as having your tubes tied (being sterilized).
- A woman can get a LARC whether or not she has had children.
- For the most part, no one can tell if you are using a LARC. Occasionally a woman's partner can feel the string on an IUD. Some providers may be willing to cut the strings if this is a safety concern.
- LARCs do NOT prevent sexually transmitted infections. – Women at risk of STIs still need to use condoms.

LARCs are Reversible

- LARCs can be reversed at any time.
- A woman getting a LARC inserted does not have to keep the LARC in the entire time it is effective. It can be removed at anytime.
- A woman can get a LARC removed if she decides she would like to become pregnant, she does not like the LARC, or any other reason.
- Once a LARC is removed, a woman can become pregnant again right away.

Intrauterine Devices (IUDs)

An IUD is a small plastic device shaped like a T, which is placed in the uterus to prevent pregnancy. There are two types of IUDs.

- The Hormonal IUD contains progestin. Progestin is a hormone found in many types of birth control pills. The hormone thickens the mucus in the cervix and prevents the sperm from getting through to fertilizing the egg. Currently, there are three brands of hormonal IUDs.
 - Mirena – Effective for 5 years.
 - Skyla – Effective for 3 years.
 - Liletta – Effective for 3 years.
- **The Copper IUD** does not contain any hormones and uses copper to prevent sperm from reaching an egg. There is only one brand of the copper IUD.
 - Paragard – Effective for at least 10 years.



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Facts about IUDs

- An IUD must be inserted and removed by a healthcare provider.
- A hormonal IUD takes approximately 7 days to start working. Women need to use additional protection for at least 7 days after the IUD is inserted. (This can include using condoms or continuing with a prescribed birth control.)
- A hormonal IUD can be used while breastfeeding.
- An IUD can be inserted immediately after an abortion, a miscarriage, or childbirth.
- After getting a hormonal IUD, women often stop getting a period or have reduced bleeding.
- After getting a copper IUD, a woman may experience more bleeding and cramping during the first few periods.

The Implant

Currently, the only birth control implant on the market is Nexplanon. This is a small plastic rod that is inserted under the skin on the upper arm. The implant contains progestin. The progestin in the implant works the same way as the hormonal IUD. The implant is effective for up to 3 years.

Facts about the Implant

- The implant has to be inserted and removed by a healthcare provider.
- After 3 years, the hormone runs out of the implant. To continue being protected against pregnancy, the previous implant will have to be removed and another inserted by a healthcare provider.
- The Implant can be used while breastfeeding
- Most women have fewer lighter periods, but some may have irregular bleeding or heavier periods.

Please note that none of the above information should be considered to be medical advice.

If you have questions about LARCs, please talk to your healthcare provider. For more information on LARCs, we encourage you to visit the following websites.

- Association of Reproductive Health Professionals
 - Common Myths- <http://www.arhp.org/Publications-and-Resources/Patient-Resources/factsheets/IUC-Myths>
 - Hormonal IUD- <http://www.arhp.org/Publications-and-Resources/Patient-Resources/Fact-Sheets/Hormonal-IUD>
 - Copper IUD- <http://www.arhp.org/Publications-and-Resources/Patient-Resources/Fact-Sheets/Copper-T-IUD>
 - Implant- <http://www.arhp.org/Publications-and-Resources/Patient-Resources/factsheets/single-rod>
- The American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists <http://www.acog.org/Patients/FAQs/Long-Acting-Reversible-Contraception-LARC-IUD-and-Implant#iud>
- Bedsider- <https://bedsider.org/>