

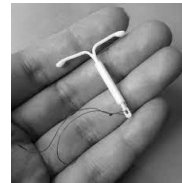
Patient Information

Long-acting reversible contraception (LARCs)

What are Long-Acting Reversible Contraceptives (LARCs)?

Long-acting reversible contraceptives (LARCs) are highly effective and convenient methods of birth control. They provide long-term protection against pregnancy without the need for daily actions or constant monitoring. LARCs are reversible, meaning you can regain fertility as soon as you stop using them.

- Copper IUD: Lasts up to 10 years. Contains no hormones and works by preventing sperm from reaching the egg. May lead to increased bleeding with periods.



Benefits of LARCs:

- Highly Effective: LARCs are more than 99% effective in preventing pregnancy, making them one of the most reliable contraceptive options available.
- Convenience: Once in place, you don't have to think about them daily or during sexual activity.
- Long-Lasting: LARCs offer protection for extended periods, reducing the need for frequent replacements.
- Reversible: Fertility returns rapidly once the LARC is removed.
- Cost-Effective: While there may be upfront costs, LARCs are generally affordable over their extended duration.

Types of LARCs:

1. Intrauterine Devices (IUDs):

- Hormonal IUD (Mirena®): Lasts up to 5 years. Provides effective contraception by releasing hormones in the uterus. May reduce bleeding and manage heavy menstrual periods.

2. Hormonal Implants (Implanon NXT®):

- Implant placed under the skin on your inner arm.
- Lasts up to 3 years, releasing hormones to prevent ovulation.
- Highly effective and suitable for most women.



3. Contraceptive Injections (Depot medroxyprogesterone acetate - DMPA):

- Given as an intramuscular injection every 12 weeks.
- Prevents ovulation and provides 99.8% effectiveness with perfect use.
- May cause changes in bleeding patterns, such as no bleeding or irregular spotting.

Who can use LARCs?

LARCs can be used by most women, including those who:



- Cannot use contraceptives containing estrogen due to health conditions.
- Experience side effects with estrogen-based contraceptives.
- Have migraines, are heavy smokers, or have never had a baby.
- Are breastfeeding, recently had a baby or an abortion.
- Have certain health conditions like diabetes, epilepsy, or HIV.
- Are overweight.

Success Rates:

- Hormonal IUD (Mirena®) and hormonal implants are more than 99% effective.
- Copper IUD is 99.2% effective.
- Contraceptive injection (DMPA) is 94% effective in typical use, 99.8% with perfect use.

Side Effects:

- LARCs are generally safe and well-tolerated, but side effects may vary among individuals.

For more information, please check:

Family Planning NSW: <https://www.fpnsw.org.au>

Sexual Health Victoria: <https://shvic.org.au/for-you/contraception>

- Common side effects may include irregular bleeding, spotting, or changes in menstrual patterns.

- Some women may experience temporary discomfort during insertion.

Talk to your health care provider for details about specific side effects.

Choosing a LARC:

Before starting a LARC, your healthcare provider will assess your health and discuss your options with you. They will explain the benefits, potential side effects, and help you decide which method aligns with your preferences and lifestyle.

Getting LARCs:

Implants and DMPAs are available from GPs and Family Planning clinics. IUDs can be inserted at Family Planning clinics, gynaecologists, and some GPs.

Remember to consult your healthcare provider for personalized advice and to find the most suitable LARC method for you.



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