



# Patient Information: MIRENA IUCD

## What is Mirena?

Mirena is a long acting, reversible hormone releasing contraceptive appliance that is inserted into the womb, ie an intrauterine contraceptive device (IUCD). It is used as a contraceptive agent and to control heavy periods.

## How does it work?

Mirena is a thin plastic T shaped device containing a synthetic female hormone, known as levonorgestrel, a progesterone. Progesterone is a contraceptive agent found in other preparations, such as "the pill". This hormone interferes with the entrance and function of sperm and reduces the monthly growth of the lining of the womb (endometrium).

## How is this inserted?

The procedure is usually performed in the consulting rooms. Anaesthesia is not normally required. The IUCD is inserted in a process similar to the taking of a Pap smear. The procedure itself takes approximately fifteen minutes. Sometimes, Mirena is inserted at the time of another procedure, such as a hysteroscopy.

Following insertion, you will not be able to feel the device, but you should be able to feel the threads of the device with your fingers.

The device is removed in a procedure similar to the insertion.

## How long does Mirena last?

The device stays in the uterus and remains effective for a maximum of five years, but may be removed sooner if desired. Fertility returns rapidly after removal. The device does not dissolve and must be removed.

## How effective is Mirena?

Mirena is extremely effective in the prevention of pregnancy and protective from the time of insertion, provided it is inserted at the right time of your cycle. If more than 1000 women use Mirena for one year, not more than two of them will fall pregnant. It does not require any input from you after insertion and is not generally affected by intercurrent illness. However, no contraceptive method is one hundred percent reliable.

## What are the disadvantages of Mirena?

It does not prevent sexually transmitted diseases. It must be removed upon completion. It can cause irregularities of your menstrual cycle, particularly in the first three months after insertion.

## When should Mirena be inserted?

Mirena is inserted within 7 days of the first day of your period, preferably just after completion of the period.

## What are the complications of this procedure?

Every contraceptive method has associated risks and side-effects. Complications include, but are not limited to:

1. at the time of insertion  
discomfort at the time of and immediately after insertion; introduction of infection; perforation of the uterus
2. menstrual control  
you can expect some change in your periods – the exact effect is difficult to predict; most women will stop having periods, and in the remainder periods become lighter or less regular; however, most women will experience spotting in the first six months after insertion and this may be troublesome.
3. expulsion  
rarely, the device may be expelled during the menstrual period; therefore, you should check for the threads of the device after each period or about once a month
4. other effects  
a number of other side effects have been reported, including headaches, breast tenderness, and changes in libido; most of these are self limiting. Occasionally, the threads may be felt by your partner, and if this causes discomfort, these can be adjusted.

Any other specific risks and complications will be discussed prior to the procedure.

## What if I have any problems?

You should seek medical attention if you experience:

- fever or feeling unwell
- offensive discharge or heavy bleeding
- intractable nausea or vomiting
- severe pain
- inability to feel the threads inside the vagina

Please contact the office on 07 3332 1999 or attend the Mater Emergency Department if you require urgent attention.