

# Following your “coil” insertion

Patient Information

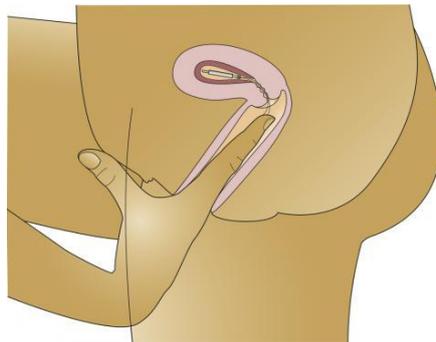


## Tayside Sexual & Reproductive Health Service

The aim of this leaflet is to give you information following your copper “coil” (IUD or “intrauterine device”) or hormone “coil” (IUS or “intrauterine system”) fitting at the Tayside Sexual & Reproductive Health Service.

### **FOLLOWING FITTING**

Please check that you can feel your “coil” threads coming out of your neck of the womb (cervix) regularly, (see picture below), especially in the first few months after insertion as there is a small chance of the device being expelled (coming out). Your cervix is at the top of the vagina, has the form of a mini doughnut and feels quite firm. You should check your threads that after each period, or around once per month. You might find adding a reminder to your (electronic) calendar helpful.



Routine “coil checks”, which were previously scheduled around four until six weeks after fitting, are not necessary if you can feel your threads and you are happy with the method settling in. Please contact our Service or your GP if you have any problems finding your “coil” threads.

Your new “coil” is going to work (please tick):

- straight away
- In a week’s time

Please use condoms, continue with your current hormonal method or abstain until then.

**If you had your copper “coil” inserted as emergency contraception: please do a pregnancy test in three weeks unless you had a normal period at the expected time.**

**If you had a late change of your hormone “coil”: please to do a pregnancy test in four weeks.**

If you had a sexually transmitted infection (STI) screening test taken at the time of fitting, please remember to call the automated phone line for results one week after your appointment.

If you have a new sexual partner or have more than one partner, we advise the use of condoms as this will give you protection against STIs, including pelvic infections. This is particularly important in the first weeks after the “coil” fitting. You could stop using condoms after both you and your partner have been screened and the tests are negative. Your health care provider will be happy to provide you with condoms.

Please note when your “coil” is due to be changed in a calendar and keep the reminder card. **It is your responsibility to arrange to have your “coil” removed or replaced when it is about to expire as the Sexual & Reproductive Health Service will not send you a reminder.** Depending on the type, “hormone “coils” last between three and five years and copper “coils” between five and ten years.

**WHEN TO SEEK ADVICE**

- Cramping discomfort is very common following “coil” insertion and can last for a few days or weeks. Regular painkillers, for example, Paracetamol and/or Ibuprofen for the first few days or a hot water bottle will help. If the pain is constant or is severe, you should seek medical advice.
- You may notice an increase in the amount of vaginal discharge initially, which is usually watery. If the discharge becomes much heavier or smelly, please seek advice.
- Irregular bleeding between your periods is very common in the weeks or months following insertion, particularly with the hormone “coil”. This can be a bit of a nuisance but is quite normal. The bleeding varies in amount and duration from person to person but is usually not heavy or painful. It generally settles within the first three to six months following insertion. If bleeding is very heavy, prolonged or painful, please seek medical advice.
- If you have had a hormone “coil”, your periods may get much lighter or stop altogether. This is nothing to worry about. If you wish, you can do a pregnancy test four weeks after “coil” insertion. After that a pregnancy test is usually not necessary unless you develop pelvic pain or pregnancy symptoms (for example, nausea, vomiting, sore breasts, dizziness).
- If you have had a copper “coil”, your period may get heavier, longer and more painful, especially over the first months. A simple painkiller like Ibuprofen taken regularly can help with both bleeding and pain. You could speak to your GP about other tablets which could help you (for example Tranexamic Acid).
- If at any point you cannot feel your threads, especially when you have been able to feel them at other times, you can feel the stem of the device or if you think your device has fallen out, then do not rely on your “coil” for contraception. Seek advice immediately as emergency contraception may be required.

- Seek medical advice if you think you might be pregnant, for example, having a late period with the copper “coil” or suffering from pregnancy symptoms like nausea, sore breasts etc. with the hormone “coil” as light or absent periods are very common with the latter. Women who get pregnant with a “coil” need an early ultrasound scan to locate the pregnancy, as there is a higher risk of an ectopic pregnancy (outside the womb).
- Many Mooncup® (menstrual cup) users are happily using their Mooncup® alongside a “coil”. Please check their website for more specific advice:  
[www.mooncup.co.uk/how-to-use-the-mooncup/contraception/](http://www.mooncup.co.uk/how-to-use-the-mooncup/contraception/)

### **Tayside Sexual & Reproductive Health Service:**

#### **Dundee:**

Tayside Sexual & Reproductive Health Service  
South Block – Level 7  
Ninewells Hospital

#### **Perth:**

Drumhar Health Centre

**Central telephone line: 01382 425542**

**Website: [www.sexualhealthtayside.org](http://www.sexualhealthtayside.org)**

Developed by Tayside Sexual and Reproductive Health Service and reviewed by patients

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