

sex talk.

answers to your questions about sex and relationships

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What are the benefits and disadvantages of IUDs?

An intrauterine device (IUD) consists of a small, T-shaped flexible plastic frame that is inserted in the uterus by a health care provider. A short string descends through the cervix into the vagina. IUDs provide very reliable contraception for as long as they remain in the uterus, or 3-10 years depending on the IUD type.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Health Statistics, the use of IUDs has increased 83% from 2006-2010 to 2011-2013. IUDs are safe, effective, and among the least expensive long-term methods of contraception available.

There are four types of IUDs. Skyla®, Mirena®, and Liletta® release hormones and ParaGard® releases copper ions. All four work by immobilizing sperm to prevent fertilization and altering the lining of the uterus to inhibit implantation – if fertilization occurs. Additionally, hormonal IUDs can block sperm from the uterus by thickening cervical mucus.

As with any form of birth control, IUDs have both pros and cons:

Advantages:

- Over 99% effective at preventing pregnancy
- Cost-effective, long-term contraception
- Can be removed easily by a clinician
- Fertility quickly returns following removal
- Copper IUDs are available for those who need a non-hormonal option

Disadvantages:

- Unlike condoms, IUDs do not protect against STDs
- Pain may occur at time of insertion
- Require insertion and removal by a clinician
- Progesterone IUDs may cause light/irregular bleeding during the first 3 months of use

Want to learn more about IUDs or other birth control options? Make an appointment with our Women's Health Clinic by calling (520) 621-9202.



www.health.arizona.edu

Have a question? Email it to sextalk@email.arizona.edu



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