



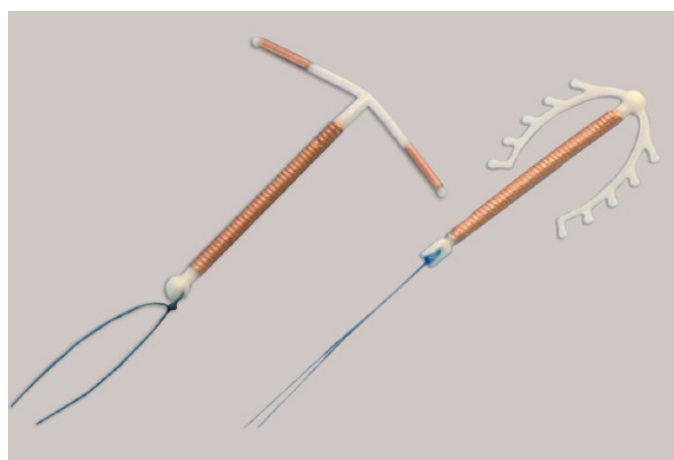
## Fact Sheet - English

# THE COPPER IUD



### What Is A Copper IUD?

A Copper IUD is a small plastic device with copper wire wrapped around its stem. It is placed inside the uterus (womb) to prevent pregnancy. It has a fine nylon string attached to it. When the Copper IUD is in place, the string comes out through the cervix (the end of the uterus) into the vagina. The IUD can stay in place for five to ten years depending on the type.



### How Does The Copper IUD Work?

The copper released from the IUD affects both the sperm and the eggs making it unlikely they will meet and the IUD causes changes in the lining of the womb making it less suitable for a pregnancy.

### How Well Does It Work?

The Copper IUD works very well. It is more than 99% effective.

### Who Can Use A Copper IUD?

Most women are able to use a copper IUD, including women who haven't had a baby before, but talk to your doctor, as there are some reasons why it may not be right for you.

### Who Should Not Use An IUD?

You should not use an IUD if you could be pregnant.

It may be better for women who have heavy periods to use a progestogen IUD. There are some medical

conditions that you may have which could prevent you from using the Copper IUD. It is very important to talk with your doctor to be sure it is safe for you to use it.

### Are There Any Side Effects?

Your periods may be heavier, longer and sometimes more painful with a copper IUD.

There is a small chance of getting a pelvic infection at the time of the copper IUD insertion.

The doctor or nurse will tell you about other risks of having the copper IUD inserted.

### How Do You Get The Copper IUD?

You need to go to a doctor or Family Planning Clinic. Usually you are asked to make two visits. On the first visit the doctor asks questions about your health and tells you about the IUD. You will have a vaginal/pelvic examination and possibly a test for vaginal infection. On the second visit the IUD is inserted. The procedure takes about 10 minutes. Some women may find the experience a bit uncomfortable while others may find it somewhat painful. Some women can feel faint during or after the insertion and you will probably need to rest for a while before you leave the clinic.

You do not have to fast before the procedure, in fact it is a good idea to eat beforehand. You should allow at least an hour to be at the clinic.

### How Is The Copper IUD Taken Out?

You need to go to a doctor or Family Planning Clinic to have it taken out. The doctor uses a special instrument to remove the IUD by gently pulling on the string. This only takes a couple of minutes. Some women find it a little uncomfortable but most women don't feel much at all.

### Things To Remember

Feel inside your vagina with your finger to check the string each month after your period, to be sure the IUD is in place.

If your period is more than a week overdue, you have a change in your usual bleeding pattern or you are

[www.fpnsw.org.au](http://www.fpnsw.org.au) | [talkline 1300 658 886](tel:1300658886) | [bookshop](#)

clinical services & information | education & training | research | international development

Family Planning NSW is a not-for-profit organisation funded by the NSW Ministry of Health

The information in this Fact Sheet has been provided for educational purposes only. FPNPNSW has taken every care to ensure that the information is accurate and up-to-date at the time of publication. Individuals concerned about any personal reproductive or sexual health issue are encouraged to seek advice and assistance from their health care provider or visit a Family Planning Clinic. Reviewed May 2014/FPNSW 05/14

concerned that you could be pregnant, go to see your doctor or clinic for a pregnancy test.

If you have any unusual discharge from your vagina or pain low in your abdomen, see your doctor straight away.

### For Further Information

- Contact the Family Planning NSW Talkline on 1300 658 886 or go to [www.fpnsw.org.au/talkline](http://www.fpnsw.org.au/talkline)
- NRS (for deaf) 133 677
- Or visit your nearest Family Planning clinic

Reviewed: June 2014 | FPNSW 06/14

*The information in this Factsheet has been provided for educational purposes only. Family Planning NSW has taken every care to ensure that the information is accurate and up-to-date at the time of publication. Individuals concerned about any personal reproductive or sexual health issue are encouraged to seek advice and assistance from their health care provider or visit an Family Planning NSW clinic.*

[www.fpnsw.org.au](http://www.fpnsw.org.au) | [talkline 1300 658 886](tel:1300658886) | [bookshop](#)

clinical services & information | education & training | research | international development

Family Planning NSW is a not-for-profit organisation funded by the NSW Ministry of Health

Family Planning QLD 07 3250 0240 | Family Planning TAS 03 6273 9117 | Family Planning VIC 03 9257 0121

Family Planning WA 08 9227 6177 | Family Planning Welfare Association of NT 08 8948 0144

Sexual Health and Family Planning ACT 02 6247 3077 | SHine SA 08 8300 5300