

# 12: INTRAUTERINE DEVICE (IUD)

**Failure rate:**  
**<1%**

IUD stands for Intrauterine Device (basically: a device inside your uterus). It's a small piece of flexible plastic shaped like a T. Sometimes it's called an IUC — intrauterine contraception.



IUDs are divided into 2 types: copper IUDs (ParaGard) and hormonal IUDs (Mirena, Kyleena, Liletta, and Skyla).

Both copper IUDs and hormonal IUDs prevent pregnancy by changing the way sperm cells move so they can't get to an egg. If sperm can't make it to an egg, pregnancy can't happen.

Copper IUD use copper to prevent pregnancy. Sperm doesn't like copper, so it is almost impossible for sperm to get to that egg.

Hormonal IUDs prevent pregnancy in two ways: 1) they thicken the mucus that lives on the cervix, which blocks and traps the sperm, and 2) the hormones also sometimes stop eggs from leaving your ovaries (called ovulation), which means there's no egg for a sperm to fertilize. No egg, no pregnancy.

IUDs work for up to 6 years (depending on the brand). They are more than 99% effective.