

Long-acting contraception: how the methods compare



	Intrauterine devices (IUDs)	Intrauterine system (IUS)	Contraceptive injections	Contraceptive implants
What is it?	A small plastic and copper device that is placed in the womb	A small plastic device that is placed in the womb and slowly releases progestogen	An injection that slowly releases progestogen	A small flexible rod that is placed under the skin, usually on the upper arm, and slowly releases progestogen
How does it work?	Can work by preventing sperm from fertilising an egg, or by stopping a fertilised egg from implanting in the womb	Mainly by preventing a fertilised egg from implanting in the womb. In some women it prevents sperm from fertilising an egg	Mainly by stopping the ovaries releasing an egg each month	By stopping the ovaries releasing an egg each month
How long does it last?	Between 5 and 10 years for the most effective types of IUD, which contain 380 mm ² of copper. But if you are 40 or older when an IUD is fitted, it may stay in place until you no longer need contraception after the menopause. Your doctor will discuss this	5 years If you are 45 or older when an IUS is fitted and you are not having periods when using it, it may stay in place until you no longer need contraception after the menopause. Your doctor will discuss this with you.	12 weeks for the most commonly used injectable contraceptive	3 years
What is the chance of getting pregnant while using it?	Fewer than 20 of every 1000 women who have an IUD for 5 years get Pregnant	Fewer than 10 of every 1000 women using the IUS for 5 years get pregnant	Fewer than 4 in every 1000 women using injectable contraceptives for 2 years get pregnant	Fewer than 1 in 1000 women who have an implant for 3 years get pregnant
Could it affect my chance of getting pregnant in the future?	No	No	It can take up to a year for fertility to return to normal after your last injection, but if you do not want to get pregnant you should start using another method of contraception as soon as your last injection runs out, even if your periods have not re-started	No
How might it effect periods?	Periods might become heavier or more painful	There may be irregular bleeding and spotting for the first 6 months. Periods usually become less frequent or stop after about a year	Periods often stop. But some women have irregular persistent bleeding when using contraceptive injections	Periods may stop, or become irregular, usually until the implant removed Period pain may improve

<p>What unwanted effects does it have?</p>	<p>Overall, the risk of ectopic pregnancy (where the fertilised egg implants outside the womb) is lower in women using IUDs than in women using no contraception, but in women who do become pregnant while using an IUD, the risk is higher. If you become pregnant while using an IUD, you need a check to make sure the pregnancy is not ectopic</p>	<p>A few women may develop Acne</p> <p>Overall, the risk of ectopic pregnancy (where the fertilized egg implants outside the womb) is lower in women using the IUS than in women using no contraception, but women who do become pregnant while using an IUS, the risk is higher. If you become pregnant while using an IUS, you need a check to make sure the pregnancy is not ectopic</p>	<p>Women may gain weight (2–3 kg over a year)</p> <p>There may be some thinning of the bones, but this largely recovers after stopping the injections and it does not seem to make breaking a bone more likely</p>	<p>A few women may develop acne</p>
<p>What checks will I need while using it?</p>	<p>You will need to see your doctor or nurse for a check-up after your first period</p> <p>IUDs have short threads attached, which hang through the cervix into the top of the vagina. Your doctor or nurse will teach you how to feel for these, to make sure the IUD is still there. You need to do this regularly</p> <p>You should see your doctor or nurse at any time if you think there is a problem related to the IUD, you want to stop using it or it is time to have it removed</p>	<p>The checks are the same as for the IUD</p> <p>You should see your doctor or nurse at any time if you think there is a problem related to the IUS, you want to stop using it or it is time to have it removed</p>	<p>None – but you need to go back regularly for repeat injections</p> <p>You should see your doctor or nurse at any time if you think there is a problem related to the injection</p>	<p>None</p> <p>You should see your doctor or nurse any time if you think there is a problem related to the implant, you want to stop using it, or it is time have it removed</p>

If you are interested in any of these methods or wish to discuss any of them further please make an appointment with our family planning clinic on 0844 477 0947.