

# What is an IUCD?

IUCD stands for intra-uterine contraceptive device. It is a small device that is inserted into the uterus (womb) to prevent pregnancy. There are many kinds of IUCDs, but the kind used at the Family Planning Association of Trinidad and Tobago (FPATT) is called the Copper T - a small flexible, plastic object with a fine copper wire wound around it for extra contraceptive effect. It is especially advantageous since Copper T requires little attention once in place.

## Who can use an IUCD?

The IUCD is perfect for the woman who has been previously pregnant but does not wish to be pregnant at present. The IUCD is not recommended for women who have never been pregnant.

IUCDs are  
harmless  
to the body

## Is the Copper T harmful to the body?

Tests worldwide have shown the IUCD to be harmless to the body. Menstrual periods may become heavier or may

last longer when using the Copper T, especially for the first month.

Women who are allergic to copper or who have multiple sex partners should not use the Copper T. Infections of the womb tend to be more common among women using this method.

## Does the IUCD always prevent pregnancy?

As long as the IUCD remains in the womb, it is highly effective in preventing pregnancy. For unknown reasons, some women are unable to keep the device in the womb as the womb expels it. If a woman does become pregnant while using an IUCD she should consult her doctor immediately.

## How is the Copper T placed into the womb?

The Copper T is placed in a narrow tube called an introducer. The introducer is placed in the vaginal canal. The device is released into the womb, where it regains its shape. The introducer is then removed. Slight discomfort may be experienced during the insertion. In some instances discomfort may be experienced in the first few days following insertion of the Copper T. Insertion of the Copper T is usually done at the end of the menstrual period.

## How long can the Copper T remain in the womb?

The Copper T can remain in the womb for up to 10 years. It must be checked six weeks after insertion and once every year.

## How do I check to see if it remains in place?

There are nylon threads attached to the end of the Copper T, which are present in the vaginal canal. However, these threads are short so neither the man nor the woman is aware of them during intercourse.

A doctor or nurse will show you how to feel for the end of the threads to check that the Copper T is in place. Feel for the threads after each menstrual period with a clean index finger. If the threads are not felt or if you feel the plastic end of the Copper T, return to the clinic for an examination.

## Does the Copper T interfere with sexual intercourse?

No. Neither the man nor the woman feels the device during intercourse. In fact, not worrying about getting pregnant makes some couples feel more relaxed.

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