

GP CARE WAKEFIELD WOMEN'S HEALTH CLINICS

Intrauterine System (IUS) clinic



You have been referred by your GP
practice for a IUS fitting appointment.
This leaflet describes what happens
during the appointment



What is an Intrauterine System (IUS)?

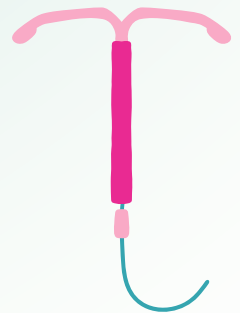
An Intrauterine System (IUS) is a small, T-shaped device commonly referred to as a coil (product names may include Mirena). It is made of plastic-coated polyethylene and contains 52mg of levonorgestrel, a hormone also found in some contraceptive pills. The IUS also contains barium sulphate which allows it to be seen on X-rays. This device gradually releases the hormone into the uterus (womb), providing effective long-term contraception and other medical benefits.

The IUS has two fine threads made of iron oxide and polyethylene attached to its base. These threads allow for easy removal and enable you or a clinician to check that the device is in place.

What is the IUS used for?

The IUS is a long-term, reversible method of contraception and is over 99% effective at preventing pregnancy. In addition to contraception, it is also used for:

- Managing heavy menstrual bleeding (menorrhagia) by reducing blood flow.
- Hormone replacement therapy (HRT) during menopause, protecting the uterus lining when used alongside oestrogen.
- The GP Care Wakefield Service will primarily fit an IUS for heavy menstrual bleeding (menorrhagia) and HRT and will not fit an IUS for contraception only. If contraception only use is required, please contact your GP



How does the IUS work?

The levonorgestrel hormone in the IUS helps in several ways:

- **To reduce menstrual bleeding:** It thins the lining of the womb, resulting in lighter periods or no periods at all.
- **To support menopause treatment:** It replaces the hormone that your body no longer produces naturally. It protects the lining of the womb from abnormal growth or cancer when used alongside oestrogen in HRT.
- **To prevent pregnancy:** It prevents the uterine lining from thickening, making it unsuitable for a fertilised egg to implant. It thickens cervical mucus, making it difficult for sperm to reach the womb. In some cases, it stops ovulation (egg release).

Is the IUS suitable for me?

Your medical history must be reviewed to determine whether the IUS is safe and appropriate for you. Certain conditions do not necessarily prevent the device from being fitted, but they should be discussed with your clinician during your pre-fitting telephone appointment:

- Allergy to levonorgestrel.
- Pregnancy, suspected pregnancy, or breastfeeding.
- Unexplained vaginal bleeding.
- Abnormal uterus or fibroids.
- Unusual vaginal discharge or itching.
- History of abnormal cervical smear tests
- Previous pelvic inflammatory disease.
- History of stroke, heart attack, or heart conditions
- Liver disease or a history of liver problems.
- Immunodeficiency (as diagnosed by a doctor).
- Current or previous cancer, suspected cancer, or leukaemia.
- Trophoblastic disease (as diagnosed by a doctor).
- Diabetes, high blood pressure, or abnormal blood lipid levels.
- History of epilepsy.
- Previous blood clots (thrombosis).
- Long-term steroid use or other medications.
- History of migraines, dizziness, or blurred vision.
- Previous ectopic pregnancy or ovarian cysts.

If any of these conditions develop while the IUS is in place, inform your GP practice immediately.

What if I want a baby?

If you decide to try for a baby, ask your doctor to remove the IUS. Fertility returns quickly after removal.

Can I breastfeed while using the IUS?

Yes, breastfeeding is safe with an IUS in place.

Can I become pregnant while using the IUS?

Pregnancy is very rare with an IUS in place. However, if you suspect pregnancy, take a test and seek medical advice immediately, as there is a risk of ectopic pregnancy.

Will I need an anaesthetic for the procedure?

No anaesthetic is required, but a local anaesthetic spray may be used on the cervix for comfort.





Booking Your Appointment with GP Care Wakefield

Your registered GP will refer you to GP Care Wakefield for an evening or weekend appointment.

We will contact you via text or call to confirm your referral and schedule an initial telephone assessment.

During this call, a trained fitting clinician will:

- Discuss the procedure and potential risks.
- Offer optional STI screening.
- Assess pregnancy risk.
- Schedule your face-to-face fitting appointment if suitable.

Your IUS prescription will be sent to your local pharmacy. You must collect the device and bring it to your fitting appointment.

Please note that if you attend the appointment without your IUS prescription this could result in your fitting being cancelled and rebooked.

If opting for STI screening, collect a self-swabbing kit from your GP practice and return it promptly.

How is the IUS fitted?

A trained clinician will:

- Perform a pelvic examination to assess the position and size of your uterus.
 - Insert a speculum to view your cervix.
 - Clean your vagina.
 - Use a small clip to hold the cervix steady.
 - Measure the uterus using a small instrument (sound).
 - Insert the IUS through a thin, flexible tube.
 - Trim the threads for future removal and checks.
- 

How soon does the IUS start to work?

Contraception: Effective after 7 days.

Heavy periods: Significant reduction in bleeding after 3-6 months.

HRT: Protection begins immediately.

How often should I have the IUS checked?

An optional follow-up check is usually offered for 6 weeks after fitting. This can be arranged at the time of your fitting appointment. Regular self-checks of the threads are advised.

The IUS can remain in place for:

- Up to 8 years for contraception.
- Up to 8 years if effectively controlling heavy bleeding.
- 5 years if used as part of HRT.

If you have any concerns or discomfort during any time before or after your appointments, contact your registered practice who will support you.

What if the IUS comes out?

If the IUS is expelled, you may not be protected from pregnancy. Seek medical advice if you experience heavy bleeding or cannot feel the threads.

Can I change my mind?

Yes, the IUS can be removed at any time by a trained clinician. Use an alternative contraception method for one week before removal to prevent pregnancy.

How will the IUS affect my periods?

You may experience:

- Lighter, shorter, or irregular bleeding.
- Spotting for 3-6 months.
- No periods at all over time.

Possible Risks and Side Effects

Possible risks and side effects include:

- Menstrual changes.
- Ovarian cysts (usually harmless and temporary).
- Perforation of the uterus (rare but serious).
- Increased risk of pelvic infection if exposed to STIs.
- Temporary hormonal side effects like bloating, breast tenderness, and mood changes.

If you experience:

- Severe pain in the lower abdomen.
- High fever.
- Unusual vaginal discharge.
- Heavy bleeding.

Seek medical advice immediately.

What to expect after having your IUS fitted

Normal daily activities can continue, but you may experience mild cramping.

- Take paracetamol or ibuprofen for discomfort.
- Avoid tampons for 2-3 months.
- Avoid sex and intense exercise for 7 days after fitting.

Need to cancel your appointment?

If you cannot attend, please notify us as soon as possible. Missed appointments require a new referral from your GP.

We value your feedback on our IUS clinic services.

We would be really grateful if you could let us know about your experience by scanning the QR code or visiting:

<https://forms.office.com/e/np8248pXti>.



Contact us:

If you need this leaflet in another format or wish to express a concern, make a complaint, or share appreciation, please visit our website or contact:

GP Care Wakefield Management Team

- **Phone:** 01924 677 000
- **Email:** wyicb-wak.gpcwmanagement@nhs.net

For further information about the services GP Care Wakefield deliver for local patients, please visit:

<https://conexus-healthcare.org/patients/>