

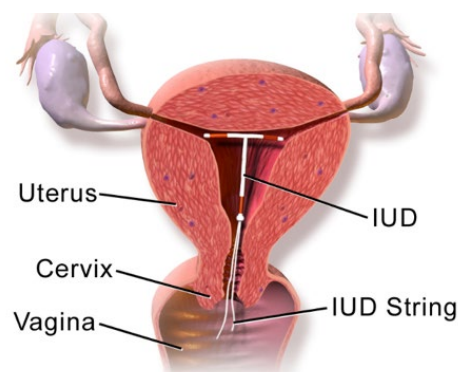


A guide to checking your coil string

This leaflet gives advice on checking the string on your IUD or IUS, to make sure the coil remains in the correct position.

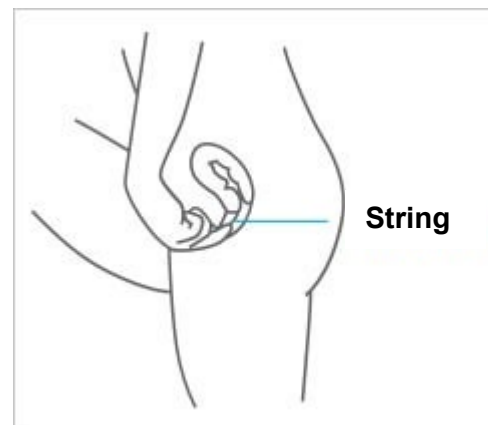
Introduction

- You have recently had an intrauterine device (IUD – copper coil) or system (IUS – hormonal coil) inserted.
- They look very similar and both have strings at the bottom, which you will need to regularly check to make sure that your coil is still in the right place.
- Both coils sit inside your uterus (womb). The strings go through the cervix (neck of the womb) and into the top of the vagina.



How do I check where the string is?

1. Wash your hands with soap and water
2. Get into a squat position or put one leg up on the bathtub – whichever you find easier
3. Use your longest finger (middle finger) to insert all the way into the vagina
4. With the tip of your finger you will feel your cervix at the top of the vagina. This feels like the tip of your nose.
5. Run your finger up and down and side to side across the cervix and you should feel the strings (although there are two strings it will feel like one; this is normal).



What if I can't feel the string?

- If you are unable to feel the strings or if you can now feel the tip of the coil (circled in the diagram, right) there is a risk the coil has moved position and is now not reliable as contraception.
- If this happens, we advise you to contact your GP or the Florey clinic (contact details at the back) as soon as possible for a coil check, and in the meantime, use extra contraception precautions, e.g. condoms.
- **Never attempt to push the coil back into place or remove the coil yourself.**



How often should I check the string?

- After the initial insertion of the coil, you may experience some cramping pains so we recommend that you wait a few days before checking the position of your string.
- We then recommend that you feel for them once a month to ensure the coil is still in the right position.
- To help you remember, choose an easy reminder, e.g. start or end of the month.



Using period products with a coil

- Both pads and tampons are safe to use if you have a coil inserted.
- With menstrual cups, there is a risk of the coil being pulled out when you remove the cup. So if you wish to use a cup, we recommend that you:
 - place the cup lower down in the vagina, and
 - before removing the cup, 'break' the seal to minimise the suction force.



Further information

Further information regarding the hormonal or copper coil can be found on the NHS website:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/contraception/ius-intrauterine-system/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/contraception/iud-coil/>

Contact details

If you have any further questions please feel free to contact us:

The Florey Sexual Health & Contraceptive Services

21a Craven Road

Reading RG1 5LE

Phone: 0118 322 7202

www.safesexberkshire.nhs.uk/local-services/florey-clinic/



To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

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