



# T-Frame Copper (Intrauterine Device) – ICGP Patient Information Leaflet

## How does the coil work?

The copper coil works by stopping sperm surviving in the cervix or womb. This means that the sperm is unable to travel to the fallopian tube to fertilise an egg. The copper coil will also prevent a fertilised egg from implanting onto the wall of the womb. The device can last between three and ten years depending on the device. The copper coil can also provide 'after sex' contraception (emergency contraception).

## How effective is the coil to prevent a pregnancy?

The coil is a very effective method of contraception. It is over 99 per cent effective in preventing pregnancy. The copper coil works immediately after it is fitted.

## How is the coil fitted?

The coil is fitted by a trained doctor or nurse; there may also be an assistant present. Fitting usually takes five to 10 minutes, using a speculum in a similar way to how cervical smears are taken. If you are due a smear this can be done at the same time. A sample may be taken to check for sexually transmitted infection. You may feel some period cramp-type discomfort. Local anaesthetic can be given if needed. You may be advised to take a painkiller such as ibuprofen before your procedure if it is suitable for you.

## When will my coil start working?

Your copper coil will be effective for contraception immediately.

## What are the side effects that can happen when a coil is inserted?

### **Changes in vaginal bleeding**

Your periods may become heavier, longer or more painful with the copper coil. However, this change can be only very slight and most women find that they don't notice the slight increase in blood loss. If it is a problem you may want to change the type of device.

### **Failure to insert the coil**

Sometimes it is not possible to insert the device and you may have to return another day to attempt insertion again or you may consider another method of contraception.

### **The coil may fall out**

The coil can fall out and so it is important to check the strings yourself or attend the doctor to see that the coil is still in place at intervals.

### **The coil can perforate the womb**

Perforation is rare and affects less than two per 1,000 fittings. The risk is six times higher in women who have recently given birth and in breastfeeding women.

### **Risk a pregnancy outside the womb**

The risk of pregnancy is extremely low with use of the coil, but if the method fails then there is a higher risk that the pregnancy will be ectopic (in the fallopian tube).

### **Infection**

There is a slight risk of pelvic infection in the first few weeks after coil insertion.

### **Pain in the pelvis (lower tummy)**

You may feel some period cramp type discomfort.

### **Faint (vasovagal episode)**

Occasionally your blood pressure and heart rate can drop during or after a coil fitting. This usually resolves quickly and can be treated.

## Before attending for your coil to be fitted

Speak to your GP to ensure that you are suitable for a coil to be inserted.

Make an appointment for a coil fitting. It is important that you tell the secretary you are having a contraceptive coil fitted. This is so they can allocate sufficient time for the appointment.

Collect your coil from your pharmacy and bring it to the appointment. Sometimes your GP will provide the copper coil but you will need to check this with your GP. The inner packing keeps the insertion device sterile so it is important that this is not opened prior to your appointment.

You will need to provide a urine sample on arrival so that a pregnancy test can be done before the procedure commences.

Consider taking a painkiller before attending.

To ensure you are not pregnant **one** of the following should apply on the day of your appointment:

- You are currently using a reliable method of contraception for example coil, implant or pill
- Are within the first five days of your period
- You are less than five days after a miscarriage or an abortion
- You have not been sexually active in the last 21 days and have a negative pregnancy test

If you are going to insert the copper coil for emergency contraception you must be within five days of when unprotected sex took place.

If you have any questions, they can be addressed on the day. If you require a call-back in advance of your appointment, please contact the surgery to arrange this.