

# FACTS ABOUT LONG ACTING REVERSIBLE CONTRACEPTION (LARC): IUD AND IMPLANT

## What is a LARC?

A LARC can be an Intrauterine Device (IUD) that is a small T-shaped device made of soft, flexible plastic:

Skyla	Liletta	Mirena	Paragard
Works by releasing a low amount of hormone (14 micrograms per day)	Works by releasing a low amount of hormone (19 micrograms per day)	Works by releasing a low amount of hormone (20 micrograms per day)	Works because it has a small amount of copper in it - no hormones
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thickens the cervical mucus to prevent sperm from entering the uterus</li> <li>Thins the lining of the wall of the uterus to prevent implantation</li> <li>Prevents sperm from living</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thickens the cervical mucus to prevent sperm from entering the uterus</li> <li>Thins the lining of the wall of the uterus to prevent implantation</li> <li>Prevents sperm from living</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thickens the cervical mucus to prevent sperm from entering the uterus</li> <li>Thins the lining of the wall of the uterus to prevent implantation</li> <li>Prevents sperm from living</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interferes with movement of the sperm (motility) and prevents fertilization of an egg</li> <li>Changes the lining of the uterus and prevents implantation</li> </ul>
Can be used for up to 3 years	Can be used for up to 3 years	Can be used for up to 5 years	Can be used for up to 10 years

## Or

A LARC can be the Birth Control Implant (Nexplanon) that is a single flexible rod about the size of a matchstick, which is inserted under the skin in the upper arm. It releases hormones into the body. It is good for 3 years.

## How well do LARCs work?

The IUD and the implant are the most effective forms of reversible birth control available. All LARCS are 99% effective in preventing pregnancy. Over the long term, LARC methods are more effective than birth control pills, the patch or the ring.

## What are the benefits of LARCs?

LARCs have the following benefits:

- No one can tell that you are using birth control.
- It does not interfere with sex or daily activities.
- It can be inserted immediately after a pregnancy termination, a miscarriage, childbirth and while breastfeeding or after pregnancy has been ruled out.
- All women, including adolescents, can get an IUD, even if they have never had children.
- If you wish to become pregnant or if you want to stop using it, you can simply have the IUD or Implant removed.
- The hormonal IUD or implant may help to decrease menstrual pain and heavy menstrual bleeding.
- The copper IUD also is the most effective form of **emergency contraception** (EC).

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## How are the LARCs inserted?

**IUD:** A health care provider must insert and remove the IUD. He or she will review your medical history and will perform a *pelvic exam*. To insert the IUD, the healthcare provider puts the IUD in a slender plastic tube. He or she places the tube into the *vagina* and guides it through the *cervix* into the uterus. The tube is removed, leaving the IUD in place.

**Birth Control Implant:** The implant is inserted into your arm by a healthcare provider. A small area on your upper arm is numbed with a local anesthetic. No incision is made during insertion. An incision is made at the time of removal. Your healthcare provider places the implant under the skin with a special inserter. The procedure takes only a few minutes.

## What are the possible side effects of LARCS?

### Copper IUD:

- Some women may experience cramping and bleeding.
- The cramping and bleeding may decrease within 1 year of use.

### Hormonal IUD (Skyla/Mirena):

- Spotting and Irregular bleeding in the first 3 to 6 months
- Less menstrual pain
- Nausea
- Headaches
- Breast Tenderness
- Depression

If signs or symptoms of a pelvic infection develop such as severe pain, excessive bleeding, fever, etc. contact your healthcare provider.

### Birth Control Implant:

- Irregular bleeding
- Less menstrual pain
- Mood Changes
- Headaches
- Acne
- Depression

Smoking increases your risk of serious side effects. Women who use birth control methods with hormones should not smoke. This includes electronic cigarettes.

## REMEMBER:

- LARCs do not protect you from STIs (sexually transmitted infections) or HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) you can get when you have sex. To protect yourself, use a latex or vinyl condom every time you have oral, vaginal or anal sex.
- Back up contraception may be needed for the hormonal IUDs and birth control implant depending on time of insertion.