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What is Mirena?

Mirena is a plastic device containing the female hormone levonorgestrel. This hormone causes changes in your cervical mucus and uterine lining, making it harder for sperm to reach the uterus and harder for a fertilized egg to attach to the uterus. The Mirena intrauterine device is placed in the uterus where it slowly releases the hormone to prevent pregnancy for up to 5 years. Mirena is meant for use in a woman who has had at least one child and is in a stable sexual relationship with someone who has no other sexual partners.

You should not use Mirena if you have abnormal vaginal bleeding, an uncontrolled pelvic infection, a condition that affects the shape of the uterus, past or present breast cancer, a liver problem, cervical or uterine cancer, a weak immune system, if you have recently had a serious pelvic infection following a pregnancy or abortion, or if you already have an intrauterine device (IUD) in place.

You also should not use Mirena if you have a history of pelvic inflammatory disease (unless you have had a normal pregnancy after the infection was treated and cleared), a recent abnormal Pap smear that has not yet been diagnosed or treated, or if you do not have an exclusive sexual partner.

Mirena is a T-shaped plastic device that is inserted through the vagina and placed into the uterus. You will receive the device in a clinic setting. Your doctor will place the device into your uterus using a thin plastic tube. The device is usually inserted within 7 days after the start of a menstrual period.

A pair of strings is attached to the device for removal when you decide to discontinue using it. Your doctor will cut these strings short enough so they do not protrude from your vagina. Do not pull on the strings or attempt to remove the Mirena intrauterine device.

Your doctor will need to see you within 4 and 12 weeks after insertion of the device to make sure it is still in place correctly. Be sure to also have regular annual pelvic exams and Pap smears while you are using Mirena.

You may have irregular periods during the first 3 to 6 months of using Mirena. Your flow may be lighter or heavier, and you may eventually stop having periods after several months. Contact your doctor if you think you might be pregnant, or if you do not have a menstrual period for 6 weeks in a row.

Mirena must be removed at the end of the 5-year wearing time. Your doctor can insert a new device at that time if you wish to continue using this form of contraception.