

IUDs for Emergency Contraception

Copper IUDs are over 99% effective to prevent pregnancies if inserted within 7 days after unprotected intercourse (for example, when a condom breaks during sex). This is because the copper ions released from the IUD work directly against the sperm and egg and prevent a fertilized egg from attaching to the uterus. This is not an abortion, because you are not pregnant until an egg has attached to your uterus. Hormonal IUDs (Mirena and Jaydess) are not effective for emergency contraception.

Comparing Emergency Copper IUDs and Emergency Pills

	Plan B (morning after pill)	Copper IUD
<i>How Effective is it?</i>	About 60%. If 100 women have unprotected sex once during their cycle, 5 would become pregnant. After taking Plan B within 5 days, only 2 women would become pregnant. Less effective if the person weighs over 175 pounds (>80 kg, BMI >30).	Over 99%. In studies of 7034 women who received emergency IUDs, 6 women (0.09%) became pregnant. We would have expected 352. There is no difference with weight or BMI.
<i>How Does it Work?</i>	It prevents or postpones ovulation.	It interferes with sperm and egg activity and prevents fertilization and implantation.
<i>Is it Safe?</i>	Yes. There is no harm to the person who takes it, nor does it cause birth defects if it does not work or the person is already pregnant.	Yes. There is less than 1/1000 chance that a hole could be made in your uterus when the IUD is inserted (perforation). These holes heal within weeks. There is a slightly increased risk of infection in the first few weeks. You will be checked and treated for this if it happens.
<i>How do I Take It?</i>	Take both pills as soon as possible. They must be taken within 5 days of the unprotected sex to have any effect but work best if taken as soon as possible.	You can call Apple Tree Maternity clinic 250-354-3884 for an appointment. Make sure you say it is for an Emergency IUD and when you had unprotected sex so you will be given an appointment within 7 days of that event. A doctor will insert it into your uterus.
<i>What are the Side Effects?</i>	You may get some nausea. You may take Gravol (dimenhydrinate) for this. Your period may be irregular for a month afterward.	Most people feel crampy pain when the IUD is inserted, but this is quick. Most people feel like they are having a period afterwards with light bleeding and maybe some cramps. Periods are heavier and longer for most people afterwards, but improve after the first 3 months.
<i>And Afterwards?</i>	You are likely to ovulate soon after taking the Plan B so make sure you are using good contraception!	If you want to leave the IUD in, you will have good contraception for 5 years. You can have it taken out any time after your next period.
<i>What is the Cost?</i>	Plan B costs \$25-40 at a pharmacy and it is less expensive or free at youth and OPT clinics.	The Copper IUD is around \$80 from the pharmacy, although price can vary

