

# sex talk.

answers to your questions about sex and relationships

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Have a question about sex or relationships?  
Email us at [sextalk@email.arizona.edu](mailto:sextalk@email.arizona.edu)

## All About IUDs



### What's an IUD?

An IUD is a small t-shaped device which is inserted into the uterus by a medical provider. A short string descends through the cervix into the upper vagina and is necessary for removal. Currently, there are three brands of IUDs approved by the FDA: Paragard® has copper in it. Mirena® and Skyla® release the hormone progestin.

### How do they work?

By disrupting sperm so they cannot join and fertilize an egg. Hormonal IUDs prevent ovulation and thicken cervical mucus, which helps block sperm from reaching an egg.

### How effective are they?

Very. IUDs are 99% effective, meaning that out of 100 women using an IUD for a year, one (or less) will get pregnant per year.

### How long do they work?

For 10 years (Paragard®), 5 years (Mirena®), or 3 years (Skyla®).

### What are the risks?

Just as all pregnancies come with risks, all contraceptive methods have health risks. IUDs may cause pain (when inserted and even afterward), cramping, spotting or irregular periods (especially the first 3-6 months with Mirena® and Skyla®).

There is risk of infection or the IUD slipping out of the uterus. In rare cases, more serious problems can occur. It's best to discuss your medical history with a medical provider.

### What do they cost?

If you have insurance, the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) requires your insurance provider to cover most or all costs for contraception. Without insurance, the cost is \$500-1000, which is generally less than the cost of birth control pills over a 3, 5, or 10 year period.

### Can I get one on campus?

Yes. The UA Campus Health Service Women's Health doctors and nurse practitioners are trained and qualified to insert and remove IUDs. All three brands are available.

### What are the pros and cons?

They are convenient, don't require daily pill scheduling, are well-liked by most users, and have a low risk of side effects. Disadvantages include menstrual problems (especially in the first months of use) expulsion, and risk of perforation of the uterus (less than 1 in 1000 users).



[www.health.arizona.edu](http://www.health.arizona.edu)

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