

what are LARCS?

Long-acting reversible contraceptives, or LARCs, are a form of birth control that prevents pregnancy over multiple years after the one-time placement of a device into a woman's body.

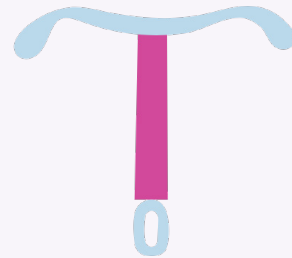
They are the most effective form of birth control and can be removed or “reversed” at any time.

They are often referred to as the “set it and forget it” methods, because after a woman has a LARC inserted, she does not need to remember to take any medications or treatments to keep preventing a pregnancy. ¹

There are two types of LARCs:

1. Intrauterine Devices (IUDs): Small, T-shaped, plastic devices that are inserted into and left inside the uterus.

- There are two types of IUD-- hormonal (AKA Mirena, Liletta, Kyleena, and Skyla) and copper (AKA Paragard). ²



2. Birth Control Implants: Small, flexible, plastic rods that are inserted under and left inside the skin of the upper arm.

- AKA Nexplanon. ³



How do LARCs work?

Hormonal IUDs and birth control implants work in the same way -- by pausing ovulation and preventing the sperm from physically reaching the egg (preventing fertilization). They release a low, steady dose of the hormone progestin into the body. This hormone pauses ovulation, thickens the mucus of the cervix, and thins the lining of the uterus.^{2,3}

Copper IUDs work by stopping the sperm from physically reaching the egg. The copper creates a repellent environment for sperm, preventing them from moving properly.²

How long do LARCs last?

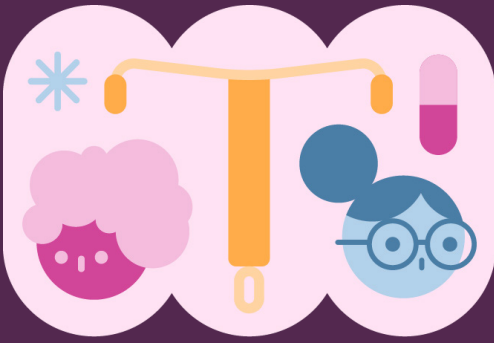
Hormonal IUDs start to work within 7 days of insertion, and they can last between 3 to 8 years depending on the brand used.

Copper IUDs start to work immediately after insertion, and they can last up to 10 years.

Implants start to work within 7 days of insertion, and they can last up to 3 years.⁴

Are LARCs effective?

They are incredibly effective. Less than 1% of them will fail and result in pregnancy within the first year after insertion. And only 0.1% of women who use implants will become pregnant during their first year of use.⁵



other LARC FAQs

Do LARCs have any serious health risks?

Like all medications, LARCs can have some side effects for women. The most common ones are nausea, headaches, breast tenderness, changes in menstrual bleeding, and temporary cramping or bruising after insertion.⁶

Serious complications are rare, and generally treatable when found. For IUDs, these can include the IUD coming out of the uterus, the IUD going through the wall of the uterus during placement and pelvic inflammatory disease (PID). For implants, these can include slight bleeding, hematoma formation, and deep or incorrect insertion.⁴

Can LARCs harm an existing pregnancy?

An IUD has the potential to cause an infection or preterm birth if someone is already pregnant, however healthcare providers are required to screen a patient for pregnancy before inserting a LARC.⁴

Are there any other reasons why a woman would opt in to use a LARC, besides preventing pregnancy?

Over time, hormonal IUDs and birth control implants help decrease menstrual pain and heavy menstrual bleeding. Women may seek out these birth control methods for those additional benefits.⁴

Reference

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