

## **Patient Information**

### **Checking your coil threads after having a Mirena or copper coil**

#### **Introduction**

There are two threads attached to the bottom of the intrauterine device (IUD). These run down your womb and out of the cervix. When in place, they sit high up in the vagina. These threads allow you to check that your coil remains correctly in place. They are also there so that your doctor can remove your coil at a later date.

It is possible for your coil to slip out of place (this is called expulsion). You may or may not be able to tell if this has happened. Therefore it is important to check your threads regularly.

#### **How to check my coil threads:**

- Clean your hands with soap and water
- Either sit or squat
- Insert your index or middle finger into your vagina until you touch the cervix (which should feel firm like the tip of your nose)
- If the IUD threads feel longer or shorter than the last time you checked, or you cannot feel them, it is possible that your IUD may have moved.

#### **When should I check my IUD threads?**

You should check your threads every three or four weeks after fitting because if your IUD is going to move out of place, it will most likely do so in the first few months after it's been inserted; or during your period. After this you can check every 3-4 months. If you can't feel your IUD threads, you should check your pads or tampons to ensure that it has not come out. Coils can fall out after recent childbirth and a new one can be inserted – contact your GP or family planning centre to arrange this.

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### **What should I do if I think my IUD has moved?**

If your IUD has moved, it will need to be assessed by a doctor. Contact your GP or family planning centre for an appointment. You can talk to your doctor about this at your 6 week postnatal GP appointment. Do not try to push the IUD back up into place.

If you are struggling with pelvic pain and think your coil has moved contact the Emergency Gynaecology Unit for advice (see below). Until you can get to a doctor, make sure that you use a backup birth control method, like a condom.

You may choose to have the IUD threads cut shorter if they can be felt by your sexual partner, however, this will obviously make it more difficult for you to check them – contact your GP or family planning unit to arrange this.

### **Are there any risks?**

After insertion of a coil, there is a chance that the coil may partially imbed in your womb or make a hole through your womb. This is called perforation. The chances of this are very rare (1 in 1,000 insertions). We may not know that this has happened during the procedure so it is important that you look out for these things:

- Severe pelvic pain after insertion (worse than period cramps);
- Pain or increased bleeding after insertion which lasts for more than a few weeks;
- Sudden changes in periods;
- Pain during sex
- Unable to feel the threads

**Reference: University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire**