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## Where can I learn more about Natural Family Planning?

Billings Ovulation Method Association  
(888) 637-6371  
[www.Boma-usa.org](http://www.Boma-usa.org)  
Couple to Couple League  
(513) 471-2000  
[www.ccli.org](http://www.ccli.org)  
Family of the Americas  
(800) 443-3395  
[www.familyplanning.net](http://www.familyplanning.net)  
Marquette University Institute for NFP  
(414) 288-3854  
[www.marquette.edu/nursing/NFP](http://www.marquette.edu/nursing/NFP)  
NFP International, Inc.  
[www.nfpandmore.org](http://www.nfpandmore.org)  
Northwest Family Services  
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One More Soul  
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# Intrauterine Devices (IUD/IUS)

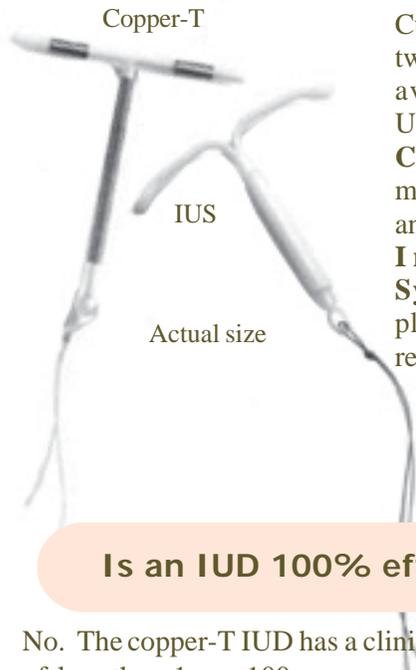


***What every woman  
needs to know***

by Lili Cote de Bejarano, MD, MPH

## What is an IUD?

An Intrauterine Device (IUD) is a small object that is placed inside a woman's uterus (womb) for the purpose of preventing or interrupting pregnancy.



Currently, there are two kinds of IUDs available in the United States: the **Copper-T IUD**, made from plastic and copper, and the **Intrauterine System IUS**, a plastic device that releases hormones.

## Is an IUD 100% effective?

No. The copper-T IUD has a clinical pregnancy rate of less than 1 per 100 women each year,<sup>1</sup> and the IUS has a rate of 0.2 per 100 women each year.<sup>2</sup>

## Warning!

The IUD does not protect against sexually transmitted infections including **AIDS**.

## How does an IUD work?

IUDs work against pregnancy in several ways. Some of these effects take place before fertilization, and others take place after the sperm and egg have united to form a new human being.

Both the copper-T and the IUS irritate the inner lining of the womb, causing inflammation. This is the same reaction the body has to any foreign object, such as a splinter under the skin. In the reproductive system, inflammation causes some cells to attack and destroy sperm, ova, and any newly formed embryo.<sup>3</sup>

The copper-T IUD also releases copper continuously into the inside of the womb, and the copper spreads into the part of the Fallopian tubes near the womb. This copper can directly poison the ovum or the sperm. If fertilization occurs, the copper can also poison the embryo while it is still in the Fallopian tube, thus causing destruction of a new human life.<sup>3</sup>

The IUS releases hormones that have several effects in the female reproductive system. In each normal cycle, the womb builds up tissue and chemicals that help with sperm survival and movement and also support implantation (the process by which a new embryo attaches to the womb to obtain nourishment to sustain life). The hormones released by the IUS (a) make the lining of the womb thinner so that sperm do not survive or move as well and, if fertilization occurs, the new embryo usually cannot implant in the mother's womb, (b) can thicken the cervical mucus, reducing sperm movement and vitality, and (c) cause a small reduction in ovulation (about 15%).<sup>3</sup>

## Does an IUD cause abortion?

Using mathematical models, it has been estimated that a woman using the IUD/IUS will have from about 0.2 to 1.8 abortions (destruction of a new human life) per year caused specifically by the IUD/IUS.<sup>3</sup>

## What are the risks from using an IUD?

Uterus perforation	Ectopic pregnancy <sup>4</sup>
Bladder perforation	Permanent sterility <sup>5</sup>
Spontaneous abortion <sup>6</sup>	Allergy to copper
Septic abortion	Copper toxicity
Pelvic inflammatory disease <sup>7</sup>	Anemia
Heavy bleeding	Backache
	Ovarian cyst <sup>8</sup>

## Does an IUD have a permanent effect on a woman's fertility?

The synthetic hormone in the IUS can cause a delay in the return of menstruation and fertility after it is removed.

If perforation or pelvic infection occurs while using the IUD, the uterus or Fallopian tubes may become damaged, thus reducing the possibility of pregnancy.

In cases of perforation of the uterus, a hysterectomy (removal of the uterus) may be required, resulting in permanent sterility.

## What are my options?

If you are single, abstinence is the best option and always works!

If you are married, the modern methods of Natural Family Planning (NFP) are the safest, healthiest, and least expensive approaches to family planning.