

Handsworth Medical Practice

Information for before and after your coil fit

Before you come for a coil fit it is important that you take some time to understand the procedure and make sure you are prepared for it.

1. Which type of coil?

When you come for a coil fit you should have decided if you want a mirena (hormone coil) or copper coil.

The mirena lasts 5 years. Most women with mirena find their periods stop all together or become very light and irregular. (It is unusual to still get regular periods with it.) It takes 2-3 months for periods to stop and you might experience light bleeding- like the end of a period for most days for 2-3 months after the mirena is fitted. Some women complain of hormonal side effects from mirena (such as mood swings, breast tenderness, acne, weight gain) - but this is unusual as the amount of hormone that gets into your circulation is small. Some women are advised to have mirena fitted for period control when they don't need it for contraception.

The copper coil lasts 10 years. You will get your regular periods but they may be a bit heavier and more painful than normal. This often settles after a few months but sometimes continues. If you have previously taken the pill for several years and change to the coil you may find your periods much heavier- this is in part because periods on this pill are lighter than a natural period. As there is no hormone in the copper coil there will be no hormone related side effects.

2. Do I need swabs?

If you have an infection when you have the coil introduced there is a risk that the infection can travel into the womb and Eustachian tubes. This will make you unwell and could lead to fertility problems. The infections we are concerned about are sexually transmitted infections such as chlamydia. You can have this infection without knowing it as it might not give you any symptoms. I would recommend that if you have not had recent STI screen, or have recently had a new partner you should see our nurse Karen for swabs prior to coil fit. This is particularly important if you think you may want to have children in the future. If you have not had swabs done we can do them at the time of the coil fit, however there would be a small risk of problems from an infection before we get the results back.

3. Could you be pregnant?

It is important that we make sure you are not pregnant before we fit a coil. Please make a note of the date of your last period before you come for the coil fit. Depending on the contraception you use and date of your last period we may want to do a pregnancy test before your coil fit.

4. Change of coil

If you are coming to have a coil replaced we can usually take the old device out and fit the new one in the same session, however, occasionally the cervix tightens and the new device can't be fitted. This means there is a risk of contraceptive failure as sperm can survive up to 7 days, so you should use condoms from your last period until your coil change to prevent the risk of contraceptive failure.

5. Consent

When you come for your coil fit I will ask you to sign a consent form, this says I have explained the risks and complications of the procedure. I will go through these when you come in but I would recommend that you read and understand the risks and complications before you come for fitting-

These are: possibility of contraceptive failure, risk of perforation, expulsion, infection, and prolonged bleeding with mirena; heavier, more painful periods with copper device. There is a good explanation of these on www.nhs.uk (then search on site for coil).

6. Before you come for coil fit

Please try to make arrangement so you can rest for a few hours at home after the coil fit- you should avoid lifting and strenuous activity for the rest of that day. If possible avoid having to bring toddlers/ young children with you for the appointment as they will want to know what we are doing to you and will find it quite alarming! it will also be difficult for you to relax. You might like to take some paracetamol or ibuprofen before you come.

7. Coil fit procedure

After we have gone through any questions you may have and signed the consent form we will fit the device. This will start like having a smear - with a plastic speculum inserted - I then put a clip on the cervix, then introduce a plastic sound to measure the womb, then

pass the coil. The procedure takes a few minutes, it is normal to get a few crampy period type pains. We will ask you stay laid down for 5-10 minutes to recover. There will be a nurse or health care assistant with me when I do the coil fit.

8. After the coil fit

As mentioned above you should avoid lifting and strenuous activity for the rest of that day. It is common to get some aching pains for a few days after the coil fit but if you get severe pain or feel unwell, or feverish or develop a discharge you must call us.

You should avoid sexual intercourse for 5 days. After this is you can feel the coil threads you can rely on the coil for contraception. You should avoid using tampons if possible for 20 days. You should come for a coil check with me or the nurse 4-6 weeks after it is fitted. After this if you can feel the threads and you are not having any problems with it we can just check the coil when you come for your routine smears.

If at any stage after you have the coil fitted you have a new sexual partner you must get swabs done to check for infection- Ideally you and your new partner should get checks for infection before unprotected intercourse.

If at any time you start with pains, discharge, bleeding after intercourse or you can no longer feel the thread of the coil you should see me. If you have a copper coil and period is a week late you should do a pregnancy test.

9. Removal

You will be given a card with the date that you coil should be removed by; we will also make a note of this on our system. When you are coming up to the date for coil change you should book to see Karen to discuss this. If you are over 50 or just using the mirena for period control we can leave it for longer than the normal 5 or 10 years.

If you decide you want to have the coil removed please book an appointment with Karen or me to discuss this. Coil removal is straightforward and usually just causes a brief sharp pain. Do not try to remove it yourself!

Dr K Otten