

# Following your 'coil' fitting

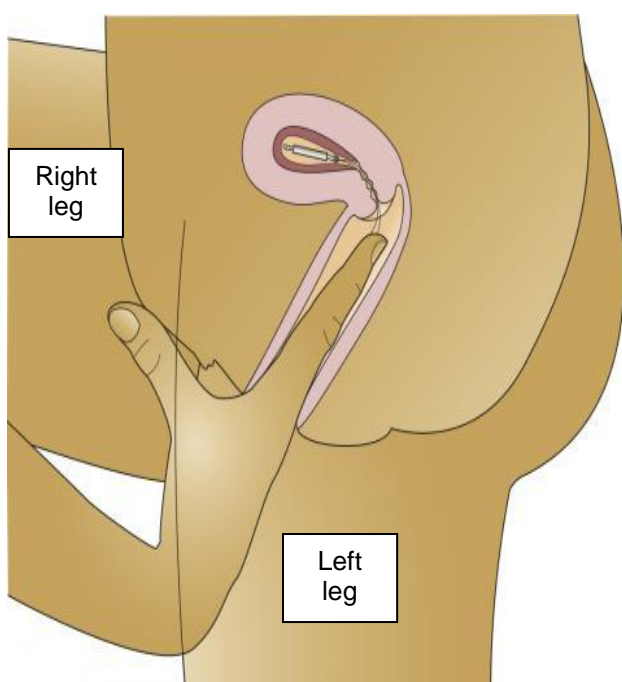
## Patient Information

### Tayside Sexual and Reproductive Health Services

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The aim of this leaflet is to give you information following your coil fitting at the Tayside Sexual and Reproductive Health Service.

One in twenty coils come out spontaneously after fitting, either lying low in the womb or coming out completely. This happens more likely in the first 3 months after the fitting or during a period. Please check therefore that you can feel your coil threads coming out of your neck of the womb (cervix) after each period, or around once per month. Either sit or squat and insert your index or middle finger into your vagina until you touch the cervix. Your cervix is at the top of your vagina, has the form of a "mini doughnut" and feels quite firm and rubbery. We usually leave the threads around 2 – 3 centimetres long (around one inch). They can feel a little hard at the beginning but often soften with time.



Checking that the coil stays in place regularly is especially important in the first few months after fitting. You might find adding a reminder to your calendar or mobile phone helpful. There is no need to feel both threads or even your cervix. Even if you only feel one thread or your threads seem to be short your coil is likely in place.

Routine coil checks by a nurse or doctor are not necessary as long as you can feel your threads and you are happy with the coil settling in. Some patients find it difficult though to find their cervix or feel the threads, or their threads curl up in the cervix or womb and get "lost". Please contact our Service or your GP if you have problems finding your threads and assume your coil is not in place until you are seen.

If you had a sexually transmitted infection (STI) screening test taken at the time of fitting, please remember to call the automated phone line for results one week after your appointment, just in case the result came back positive and we were not able to contact you.

If you have a new sexual partner or have more than one partner, we advise the use of condoms as this will give you protection against STIs, including pelvic infections like pelvic inflammatory disease (PID). This is particularly important in the first weeks after the coil fitting. You could stop using condoms after both you and your partner have been screened and the results are negative. Your health care provider will be happy to provide you with condoms.

Please note when your coil is due to be changed in a calendar or mobile phone and keep the reminder card. When a coil is due changed or removed depends on the type of coil, your age and the reason for the insertion. We usually also inform your GP about the coil insertion unless you told us otherwise.

**It is your responsibility to arrange to have your coil removed or replaced when it is about to expire as the Sexual and Reproductive Health Service will not send you a reminder.**

**When to seek medical advice from Tayside Sexual and Reproductive Health Service or from your GP:**

- Cramping discomfort which comes and goes is very common following coil fitting and can last for a few days or weeks. Regular simple painkillers, for example, Paracetamol and/or Ibuprofen or a hot water bottle will help. If the pain is constant, severe or not improving with time, or you feel unwell or get fever with it, you should seek medical advice. Pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) is a rare complication of a coil insertion.
- You may notice an increase in the amount of vaginal discharge initially, which is usually watery. If the discharge becomes much heavier or smelly, please seek medical advice.
- With a hormone coil, irregular bleeding between your periods is very common in the weeks or months following fitting. This can be annoying but is quite normal while the hormone thins the lining of the womb over time. This bleeding between periods varies in amount and duration from person to person but is usually not heavy or painful. It generally settles within the first three to six months following fitting. If bleeding is very heavy, prolonged or painful, please seek medical advice.
- With a hormone coil, your periods may get much lighter or stop altogether with time. This is nothing to worry about. If you wish, you can do a pregnancy test 4 weeks after coil fitting. After that, a pregnancy test is usually not necessary unless you develop pelvic pain or pregnancy symptoms (for example, nausea, vomiting, sore breasts, dizziness).
- With a copper coil, your period may get heavier, longer and more painful, especially over the first months. A simple painkiller like Ibuprofen taken regularly can help with both bleeding and pain. You could speak to your GP about other tablets which could reduce the bleeding (for example Tranexamic and/or Mefenamic Acid). You might also consider a change to a hormone coil if the bleeding is not improving.
- If at any point you cannot feel your threads, especially when you have been able to feel them at other times, you can feel the hard plastic stem of the device, if the threads are much longer than before or if you think your device has fallen out: do not rely on your coil for contraception. Seek advice immediately as emergency contraception may be required.

- Seek medical advice if you think you might be pregnant, for example, having a late period with the copper coil or suffering from pregnancy symptoms like nausea, sore breasts etc. with the hormone coil (as light or absent periods are very common with the latter). Patients who get pregnant with a coil need an early ultrasound scan to locate the pregnancy, as there is a higher risk of an ectopic pregnancy (outside the womb) because the coil is so effective in preventing a pregnancy inside the womb. .
- Many menstrual cup (for example Mooncup®) users are happily using their cup alongside a coil but there might be an increased risk of the coil coming out (expulsion). Please remember to insert the cup low in your vagina, to break the seal before removing the cup and not to pinch the cup and pulling accidentally on the threads of your coil. You could check the website of your menstrual cup provider for more specific advice.

**Important additional advice from your nurse or doctor after fitting or replacement:**

Your new coil is going to be effective:

- straight away or
- in one week: please use condoms, continue with your current method or abstain from sex until 7 days have passed.

You will need a pregnancy test in 4 weeks:

- Yes
- No

**Tayside Sexual & Reproductive Health Service:**

**Dundee:**

Tayside Sexual & Reproductive Health Service  
South Block – Level 7  
Ninewells Hospital

**Perth:**

Drumhar Health Centre

**Central telephone line: 01382 425542**

**Website: [www.sexualhealthtayside.org](http://www.sexualhealthtayside.org)**

**We want to hear about your care experience**  
Share your story – help make our service better



<https://www.careopinion.org.uk/tellyourstory?nacs=T101H-sex-health>

You can find more information about this here:

[https://www.nhstayside.scot.nhs.uk/GoingToHospital/GiveUsFeedback/PROD\\_320144/index.htm](https://www.nhstayside.scot.nhs.uk/GoingToHospital/GiveUsFeedback/PROD_320144/index.htm)

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This leaflet can be made available in other languages and formats on request  
Speak to the nurse/health professional looking after you to arrange this