

# Smart alternatives to taking the Pill every day

Long Acting Reversible Contraception

Free yourself of your  
daily pill reminders

#itsmychoice

Ask your doctor or visit  
[www.mycontraception.ie](http://www.mycontraception.ie)



## The most commonly used forms of contraception<sup>1</sup>:

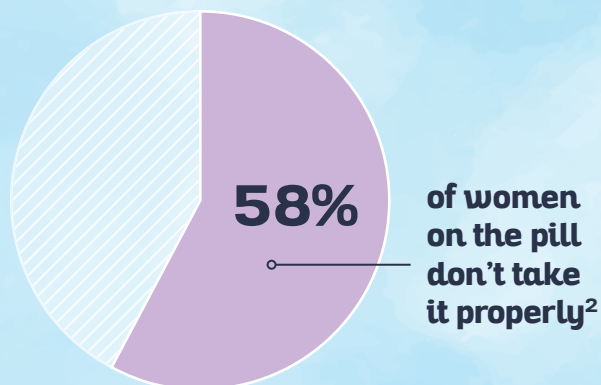


**43% Pill**

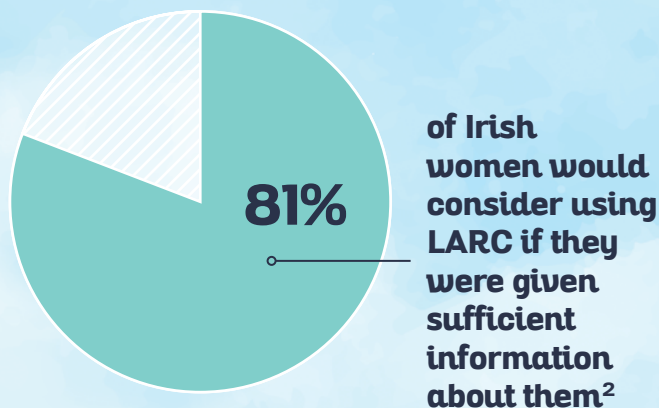
**62% Condom**



**16% LARC**



**58%**  
of women  
on the pill  
don't take  
it properly<sup>2</sup>



**81%**  
of Irish  
women would  
consider using  
LARC if they  
were given  
sufficient  
information  
about them<sup>2</sup>

## Introduction

There are many different types of contraception available today and choosing the one that is right for you is a highly personal decision.

This booklet will give you an overview of the different types of contraception but its main focus will be on a group of contraceptives known as Long-Acting Reversible Contraceptives (LARCs). The LARC group includes the coil (hormonal coil & copper coil), implant and the injection. We hope this will help you with your conversation with your healthcare professional.

In a study where 2,500 women were given full information and counselling on all types of contraception, two thirds chose long acting contraception rather than short acting methods.<sup>3</sup>

# #DYK

## Did you know...

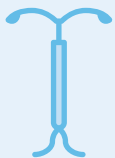
- Less than 1 out of every 100 women using a LARC will become pregnant.<sup>4</sup>
- 9 out of every 100 women using the Pill will become pregnant.<sup>4</sup>
- 18–21 out of every 100 women using condoms will become pregnant.<sup>4</sup>

**So, how effective are the different types of contraception?**

### Long acting contraception

**SUPER EFFECTIVE**

**99%<sup>4\*</sup>**



**IUS**  
3–6 years



**Implant**  
3 years



**IUD**  
5–10 years



**Sterilisation**  
forever



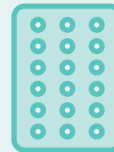
**Injection**  
3 months

**94%<sup>4\*</sup>**

### Short acting contraception

**HIGHLY EFFECTIVE**

**91%<sup>4</sup>**



**Pill**  
every day



**Patch**  
every week



**Vaginal Ring**  
every month

### Barrier and other methods

**LESS EFFECTIVE**

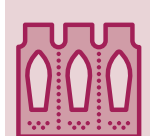
**72–82%<sup>4</sup>**



**Withdrawal**  
every time



**Fertility Awareness**  
every day



**Spermicides**  
every time



**Cervical Cap, Diaphragm & Sponge**  
every time



**Female & Male Condom**  
single use

\* The exception is the injection. 6 out of every 100 women using the injection will get pregnant.

# LARCs

Long-Acting Reversible Contraceptives are a great option for busy women.

With LARCs you can 'fit and forget', so contraception can be one less thing to worry about.



One of the most effective types of contraception:

**OVER  
99%  
EFFECTIVE**

An exception can be the injection which can have slightly lower efficacy.

**SOME OFFER  
ADDITIONAL BENEFITS  
SUCH AS RELIEF  
OR REDUCTION OF  
HEAVY PERIODS.**

**CAN BE USED  
FOR A LONG  
TIME BUT CAN  
BE STOPPED AT  
ANY STAGE.**

**Highly  
convenient as  
you don't have  
to worry about  
remembering  
to take them  
every day.**



**AFTER REMOVAL YOU CAN  
BECOME PREGNANT AS QUICKLY  
AS SOMEONE WHO IS NOT USING  
CONTRACEPTION.**



They're available on prescription and can be purchased under the General Medical Service (GMS/Medical Card) and Drugs Payment Scheme (DPS). Ask your pharmacist for more information. Insertion costs vary between GP surgeries.

**THEY  
DON'T  
INTERFERE  
WITH SEX.**

**CAN BE USED IF YOU  
CANNOT OR DO  
NOT WANT TO TAKE  
OESTROGEN.**

**CAN BE  
USED WHILE  
BREASTFEEDING.**

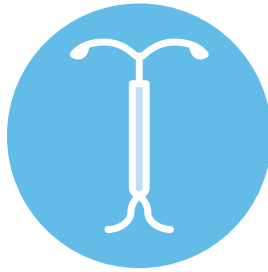
# Intrauterine System

## (IUS<sup>5,6,7</sup> / HORMONAL COIL)

### How do I use it?

- The IUS is inserted by a trained doctor or nurse.
- There are three types of IUS which are effective for up to 3, 5 & 6 years.

Discuss with your healthcare professional which is most suitable for you.



### BENEFITS

- Can be removed at any time, and once removed you can become pregnant as quickly as someone who is not using contraception.
- Can be used by women of all ages; whether they have had children or not.
- Can reduce heavy, painful periods.
- An IUS insertion is usually well tolerated by most women.
- Removal of an IUS is usually very quick and easy.

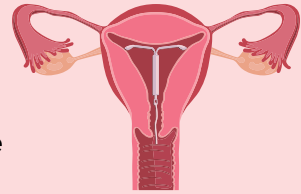
#DYK

**IUS  
has the lowest dose  
of all hormonal methods  
of contraception and works  
within the womb.**

### How does it work?

The IUS is a small, soft, plastic device with a reservoir containing the hormone progestogen which is placed in the womb. A low dose of progestogen is continuously released from the system.

The IUS prevents pregnancy mainly by thickening cervical mucus at the entrance of the womb, making it difficult for sperm to get through.



### CONSIDERATIONS

- Irregular bleeding and spotting can be common in the first 6 months of use.
- They must be fitted by a trained professional. Cramping may be experienced after insertion.
- Some women may experience common hormonal side effects such as headaches, breast tenderness and abdominal discomfort.
- There is a small risk of infection at insertion and of expulsion.

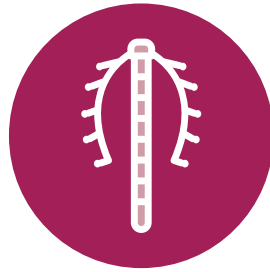


# Intrauterine Device

## (IUD / COPPER COIL)

### How do I use it?

- The IUD is inserted into the womb by a trained doctor or nurse.
- Effective for 5 to 10 years.



### BENEFITS

- Can also be used as emergency contraception if inserted within 5 days of unprotected sex.
- Removal of an IUD is usually very quick and easy.
- Can be used by women of all ages; whether they have had children or not.
- Suitable for women who cannot or do not want to take a hormonal method of contraception.
- Fertility returns to normal levels once removed.

#DYK

**LARC**  
options can be used  
for a long time but can be  
stopped at any stage.

### How does it work?

A small device with a copper thread or cylinders which is placed in the womb.

The IUD releases copper ions which immobilise the sperm and make it difficult for the egg to travel along the fallopian tubes. If the egg is fertilised, the IUD prevents it from implanting itself in the womb.

### CONSIDERATIONS

- May cause increased cramping, heavier and prolonged periods.
- Usually not the first choice for women with anaemia as may cause heavier than normal bleeding.
- They must be fitted by a trained professional. Cramping may be experienced after insertion.
- Some women experience headaches, tenderness and acne after an IUD is fitted.



# Sub-Dermal Implant<sup>8</sup>

## How do I use it?

- Implanted with minor surgery, under the skin of your arm, by a trained doctor or nurse.
- Effective for three years.
- Can be removed at any time with minor surgery.



## BENEFITS

- Can be used by women of all ages; whether they have had children or not.
- Also suitable for women who are breast-feeding or who do not tolerate estrogen.
- Fertility returns to normal once the implant is removed.

#DYK

**LARC options don't interfere with sex.**

## How does it work?

A small, plastic rod containing the hormone progestogen is inserted under the skin of the upper arm.

The hormone is released in small doses over time.

## CONSIDERATIONS

- Some women may experience common hormonal side effects such as headaches, breast tenderness and abdominal discomfort.
- Irregular bleeding may occur for the first few months and the bleeding pattern experienced during the first three months is likely to continue.
- It requires a trained healthcare provider for insertion and removal.





# Injection<sup>9</sup>

## How do I use it?

- The injection is given by a doctor or nurse.
- It lasts for 3 months.



## BENEFITS

- Easy to administer.
- Progestogen-only injections are also suitable for women who are breastfeeding, or who cannot or do not want to take estrogen.
- Can reduce heavy, painful periods. Initial irregular bleeding may take a while to settle down. Some women may even stop having periods altogether.

#DYK

**LARCs  
can be used if you  
cannot or do not want  
to take oestrogen.**

## How does it work?

It is an injection containing the hormone progestogen and works by preventing ovulation.

## CONSIDERATIONS

- It may take up to one year for your period and fertility to return after stopping injections.
- Some women may experience common hormonal side effects such as headaches, breast tenderness and abdominal discomfort.
- With progestogen-only injections, young women may have a risk of losing bone mineral density which may increase the risk of osteoporosis.
- There is a tendency for women to gain weight while on the injection.





# Thinking about LARC?



## Talking about LARC



## Ask yourself a few questions:

Have you ever had a pregnancy scare situation?

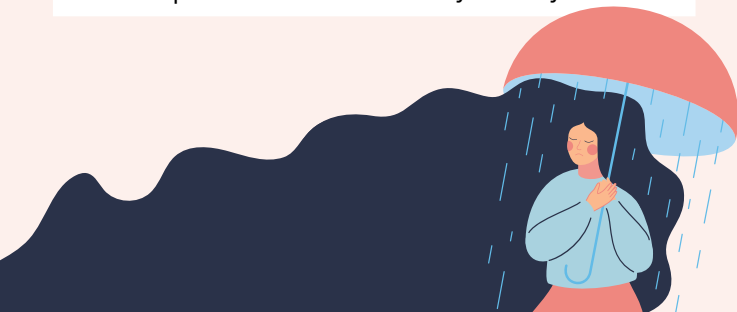
Have you forgotten to take the pill in the last 3 months?

Have you ever been stressed out when your period was late?

Have you ever felt frustrated having to remember to take the pill every day?

After years of taking the pill, is it a routine that you'd like to get rid of?

Does the pill add to the burdens of your daily life?



If you have answered yes to any one of these questions, long acting reversible contraception (LARC) might be right for you.

## Here's how to start the conversation

“ I would like to learn more about alternatives to the pill. Which long acting contraception methods can you recommend and explain to me? ”

“ Which long acting contraceptive would be best for me considering my age and lifestyle? ”

“ What forms of Long Acting Contraception are available at your practice? ”

“ How exactly does it work compared to the method I am using now? ”

“ Can you tell me about the experiences you have in your practice with placing different forms of long acting contraception? ”

Now you're all prepared for talking to your doctor to find your perfect match!

# Conclusion

Remember contraception is a personal choice; you should choose one that suits you and your lifestyle best!

For more information on LARCs and other forms of contraception, please talk to your doctor or check out [www.mycontraception.ie](http://www.mycontraception.ie)

**NOTE:** The aim of hormonal contraception is to prevent unplanned pregnancy. However if you want to protect yourself from sexually transmitted infections (STIs), condoms should also be used.



# References

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9. Depo-provera Summary of Product Characteristics, [www.medicines.ie](http://www.medicines.ie)

HAVING THE  
**POWER**  
TO DECIDE IF &  
WHEN TO GET  
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Long Acting Reversible Contraception

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