



IS THE PILL REALLY MY BEST OPTION?

Well, there's
**LONG ACTING REVERSIBLE
CONTRACEPTION**,
an alternative to taking
the pill every day.

Ask Your Doctor or Visit:
WWW.MYCONTRACEPTION.IE



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 briefly goes through all the different types of contraception but its main focus will be on **Long-Acting Reversible Contraceptives (LARCs)**.

More than a quarter of women in Ireland (27%) use condoms, with the same number (27%) using short-acting hormonal contraception, such as the pill, even though these methods can be less effective than the long acting options as they often rely on having to take them properly. Approximately 60% of women on the pill do not take it properly and miss an average of 2-3 pills per month, which can obviously lead to unintended pregnancies.

79% of women in Ireland are not aware of LARCs even though they are one of the most effective types of contraception; you do not have to take them every day and are highly regarded by doctors and nurses.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF CONTRACEPTION

LONG-ACTING REVERSIBLE CONTRACEPTIVES – LARCS

WHAT ARE THE OPTIONS?

- Intrauterine System (IUS)
- Intrauterine Device (IUD)
- Injection
- Sub-dermal Implant

SHORT-ACTING HORMONAL CONTRACEPTIVES

WHAT ARE THE OPTIONS?

- Combined Pill
- Progestogen-Only Pill
- Contraceptive Patch
- Vaginal Ring

BARRIER METHODS

WHAT ARE THE OPTIONS?

- Male Condoms
- Female Condoms
- Diaphragms & Spermicides

STERILISATION

WHAT ARE THE OPTIONS?

- Male Sterilisation
- Female Sterilisation

OTHER METHODS

WHAT ARE THE OPTIONS?

- Fertility Awareness
- Withdrawal Method

CONTRACEPTIVES DIFFER IN HOW EFFECTIVELY THEY WORK AND IN HOW OFTEN THEY ARE TAKEN

SUPER EFFECTIVE
99%¹



IUS
3 - 5 YEARS



The Implant
3 YEARS



IUD
5 - 10 YEARS



Sterilisation
FOREVER

LESS THAN 1 PREGNANCY
PER 100 WOMEN IN 1 YEAR



Injection
1 - 3 MONTHS

2 - 6 PREGNANCIES
PER 100 WOMEN IN 1 YEAR



The Pill
EVERY DAY



The Patch
EVERY WEEK

HIGHLY EFFECTIVE
91-94%¹



Vaginal Ring
EVERY MONTH

6 - 9 PREGNANCIES
PER 100 WOMEN IN 1 YEAR



Withdrawal
EVERY TIME



Cervical Cap,
Diaphragm & Sponge
EVERY TIME



Spermicides
EVERY TIME

18 OR MORE PREGNANCIES
PER 100 WOMEN IN 1 YEAR

LESS EFFECTIVE
72-82%¹



Fertility
Awareness
EVERY DAY



Female & Male
Condom
SINGLE USE

LONG-ACTING REVERSIBLE CONTRACEPTIVES (LARCS)

LONG ACTING REVERSIBLE CONTRACEPTIVES ARE A GREAT OPTION IF YOU HAVE A BUSY LIFE, FILLED WITH WORK, PLAY OR TRAVEL. WITH LARCS YOU CAN 'FIT AND FORGET', NO NEED TO WORRY ABOUT REMEMBERING TO TAKE THE PILL. CONTRACEPTION CAN BE ONE LESS THING TO REMEMBER!

LARC BENEFITS:

- LARCs are one of the most effective type of contraception, as they are over 99% effective. (An exception can be the injection which can have slightly lower efficacy).
- LARCs are highly convenient as you don't have to worry about remembering to take them every day.
- They can be used for a long time but can be stopped at any stage with no delay in return to fertility (an exception can be the injection).
- Some LARCs offer additional benefits such as relief or reduction of heavy periods.
- LARCs do not interfere with sex.
- LARCs can be used while breastfeeding.
- LARCs can be used if you cannot or do not want to take estrogen.

LARC OPTIONS: INTRAUTERINE SYSTEM (IUS)

(Also known as the hormonal coil).
The IUS should **not** be confused with the copper IUD.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

The IUS is a small, 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. It also thins the lining of the womb.

HOW DO I USE IT?

- The IUS is inserted into the cavity of the womb by a trained doctor or nurse.
- Two types of IUS:
 1. Effective for 5 years releasing low amounts of progestogen only.
 2. Effective for 3 years releasing even lower amounts of progestogen only.

BENEFITS

- Can be removed at any time, and fertility returns quickly after removal.
- Can be used by women of all ages; whether they have had children or not.
- Can reduce heavy, painful periods.
- IUS contains the lowest dose of all hormonal methods of contraception and releases it locally in the womb.
- Removal of an IUS is usually very quick and easy.

CONSIDERATIONS

- 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.
- Irregular bleeding may be experienced for the first few months after which most women will have much shorter and lighter periods, while some may even stop having periods altogether.



LARC OPTIONS: INTRAUTERINE DEVICE (IUD)

(Also known as copper coil).
The copper IUD should **not** be confused with the IUS.

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.

HOW DO I USE IT?

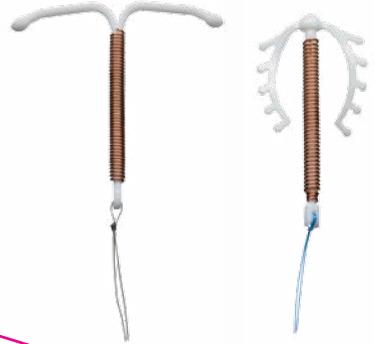
- The IUD is inserted into the cavity of the womb by trained healthcare professionals .
- Effective for 5 to 10 years.

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.

CONSIDERATIONS

- May cause increased cramping, heavier and prolonged periods.
- Usually not the first choice for women with anemia as may cause heavier than normal bleeding.
- They must be fitted by a trained professional. Cramping may be experienced after insertion.



LARC OPTIONS: INJECTION

HOW DOES IT WORK?

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

HOW DO I USE IT?

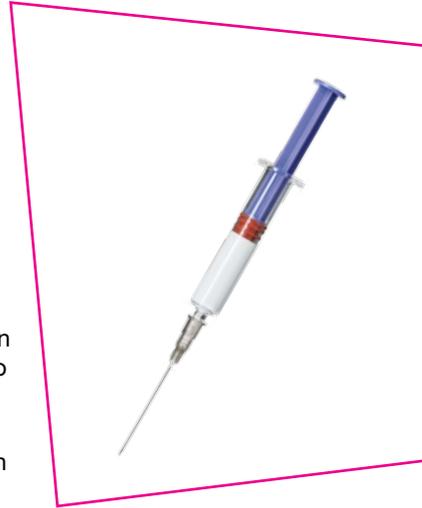
- The injection is given by a doctor or nurse.
- It lasts for 3 months.

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.

CONSIDERATIONS

- In some cases 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.



LARC OPTIONS: SUB-DERMAL IMPLANT

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.

HOW DO I USE IT?

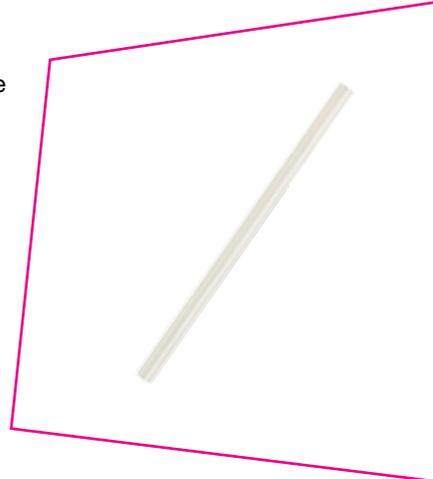
- Implanted with minor surgery, under the skin of your arm, by a trained doctor or nurse.
- Effective for three years.
- Can be removed at any time with minor surgery.

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.

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 broadly predictive of future bleeding patterns for many women.



CONCLUSION

IN A RECENT STUDY WHEN 2,500 WOMEN WERE GIVEN FULL INFORMATION AND COUNSELLING ON ALL TYPES OF CONTRACEPTION, TWO THIRDS CHOSE LONG ACTING CONTRACEPTION RATHER THAN SHORT ACTING CONTRACEPTION.

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

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.

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