



Paragard IUD

ParaGard T 380A IUD is an intrauterine device (IUD) for birth control that does not contain synthetic sex hormones. The ParaGard IUD is made of flexible plastic and copper, crafted into the shape of a small “T.” It is a little over an inch long, with fine copper wire wrapped around the stem and arms. A thin thread is attached through the bottom of the “T” to help locate and remove the IUD. ParaGard does not contain latex. The IUD must be placed inside the uterus by a doctor, where it may remain for up to ten years. ParaGard starts working as soon as it is inserted into the uterus. ParaGard is probably the longest-lasting, reversible, hormone-free contraceptive on the market. This device is expensive; Paragard costs about \$450 US (but can be found in some internet pharmacies for \$200.00).

Mechanism for Paragard

According to the manufacturers, how the ParaGard T 380A prevents pregnancy is not completely understood. Several theories have been suggested, as multiple birth control mechanisms may affect the ovum, sperm, and fertilized egg. Clinical studies with copper-bearing IUDs suggest that fertilization is prevented by killing sperm. However, it is also known that the ParaGard IUD does not prevent ovulation. Some sperm may in fact reach the egg, resulting in fertilization. When fertilization does occur, ParaGard is thought to act as birth control by preventing the embryo from implanting in the uterus.

Effectiveness of Paragard IUD

ParaGard is thought to be very effective, with less than a 1% failure rate for perfect users. However, this number does not include women whose IUD fell out of place. In clinical trials, approximately 1 in 20 women expelled the ParaGard IUD during the first year. The IUD is less effective for teens than for women over twenty. After removing the ParaGard IUD, most women are able to become pregnant right away. When a pregnancy happens with the ParaGard IUD in place, the long-term effects on the unborn child are not known, but no series of abnormalities have been documented. In the event of pregnancy, the ParaGard IUD should be removed. Removing the IUD may cause a miscarriage. However, successful removal in pregnancy decreases the likelihood of pregnancy complications.

Safety Information for Paragard IUD

Many women use the Paragard successfully and not having to remember birth control on a daily basis significantly decreases unwanted pregnancies. The ParaGard IUD does not protect against any sexually transmitted disease. Women who have more than one sexual partner or who are at risk for an STD are at a higher risk for PID, and should also not use ParaGard. The ParaGard IUD is not suitable for women who have a uterus that is not normally shaped, have had a recent post-pregnancy or post-abortion uterine infection, have cancer of the uterus or cervix, have unexplained bleeding of the vagina, have an infection in the cervix, or have an allergy to copper.

Side Effects & Health Risks of Paragard

When ParaGard is put in place, cramping or pain may be experienced. Some women feel faint or dizzy. The most common side effect of ParaGard are longer and heavier periods, and some women have spotting between periods. Usually, these problems go away after a few months. However, if menstruation is very heavy or does not stop when it should, call your doctor. You should also call your doctor immediately if you miss a period, because this means that you might be pregnant.