

Busting the Myths around Long-Acting Reversible Contraception (LARC)



To support you in your conversations with patients, Organon has prepared some materials to address common myths on LARCs.

There are four different types of LARC:¹



The hormonal implant



The copper (non-hormonal) intrauterine device (IUD), also known as 'the coil'², and the hormonal intrauterine system (IUS)



The hormonal injectable contraceptive

IUDs and implants are highly effective and low maintenance, making them increasingly popular among women.³ They are an important component of contraceptive options, yet lack of awareness and education has led to misunderstanding, myths and misconceptions around their use.⁴

⊗ MYTH 1

Having a LARC fitted is painful

All LARCs require a small fitting procedure by a trained healthcare professional:^{1,2,5}

- ▶ The contraceptive implant, which can last for three years,² is fitted using local anaesthetic to numb the area, so the procedure may not be painful.⁵
- ▶ For many women, the pain associated with an IUD fitting is similar to period cramps, however, some women find the experience painful and anxiety-provoking. It is recommended that women should be offered pain relief during an IUD fitting.⁶

⊗ MYTH 2

A LARC can easily become infected when administered

- ▶ There is a very small risk of infection associated with any medical procedure. However, the risk of infection during or after a LARC has been fitted is minimized if the after-care advice given by the healthcare professional is followed.^{5,7,8}

⊗ MYTH 3

LARCs protect against sexually transmitted infections (STIs)

- ▶ LARCs are effective at preventing pregnancy, but do not provide any protection from STIs.⁵

⊗ MYTH 4

LARCs cause heavier periods

- ▶ Some LARCs are associated with an increase in bleeding.^{9,10,11} The copper IUD, for example, can be associated with heavier, longer and more painful periods, though this can improve after a few months.⁹ Other LARCs, such as the implant, can also make periods more irregular or stop altogether.¹⁰ The IUS can reduce heavy period and make them shorter, lighter or stop altogether.¹¹

⊗ MYTH 5

Fertility does not go back to normal after LARCs are removed

- ▶ LARCs can be discontinued at any time by a healthcare professional, and fertility may quickly return for the IUS, IUD and implant.⁵ It can take up to one year for fertility to return to normal after the injection wears off.⁸

⊗ MYTH 6

Myth 6: LARCs are only for women who have had children

- ▶ LARCs are suitable for any women of reproductive age, whether or not they have had children.^{8,10,12}

⊗ MYTH 7

LARCs can cause hair loss

- ▶ Hair loss is not reported as a common side effect in clinical trials of the implant or IUD.^{13,14} Over a 5-year period, hair loss was observed in fewer than 5% of participants in a study of an IUD treatment.¹⁵

References

1 National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (UK). Clinical guidelines No.30. Long-acting reversible contraception, 2019. Available at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK553263/>. Last accessed: December 2021. 2 Patient Info. Long-acting reversible contraceptives. <https://patient.info/sexual-health/long-acting-reversible-contraceptives-larc>. Last accessed: December 2021. 3 Cappello, O. Powerful Contraception, Complicated Programs: Preventing Coercive Promotion of Long-Acting Reversible Contraceptives. Guttmacher Policy Review. 2021. Vol. 24. 4 Shartzter, A., Courtot, B., McMorro, S., Benatar, S., Kenney, GM. Knowledge Gaps and Misinformation about Birth Control Methods Persist in 2016. Urban Institute. 2016. 5 Brook. Myths about longacting contraception. Available at: <https://www.brook.org.uk/your-life/myths-about-long-acting-reversible-contraception-larc>. Last accessed: December 2021. 6 The Faculty of Sexual & Reproductive Healthcare of the Royal College of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists (FSRH). FSRH press release: women should always be offered pain relief in IUD procedures. July 2021. Available at: <https://www.fsrh.org/news/fsrh-press-release-recommendations-iud-pain-relief-2021/>. Last accessed: December 2021. 7 The Faculty of Sexual & Reproductive Healthcare of the Royal College of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists (FSRH). Intrauterine Contraception. Clinical Effectiveness Unit. April 2015. Available at: <https://www.fsrh.org/standards-and-guidance/documents/ceguidanceintrauterinecontraception/>. Last accessed: December 2021. 8 NHS. The contraceptive injection. Available at: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/contraception/contraceptive-injection/>. Last accessed: December 2021. 9 NHS. Intrauterine device. Available at: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/contraception/iud-coil>. Last accessed: December 2021. 10 NHS. Contraceptive implant. Available at: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/contraception/contraceptive-implant>. Last accessed: December 2021. 11 NHS. Intrauterine system (IUS). Available at: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/contraception/ius-intrauterine-system>. Last accessed: December 2021. 12 Terrence Higgins Trust. Long-acting reversible contraception. Available at: <https://www.tht.org.uk/hiv-and-sexual-health/sexual-health/improving-your-sexual-health/contraception/>. Last accessed: December 2021. 13 U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). NEXPLANON (etonogestrel implant). Radiopaque, Subdermal Use Only. Prescribing Information. Available at: https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/drugsatfda_docs/label/2015/021529s011bl.pdf. Last accessed: December 2021. 14 U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Depo-Provera Contraceptive Injection. DEPO-PROVERA CI (medroxyprogesterone acetate) injectable. Prescribing Information. Available at: https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/drugsatfda_docs/label/2010/020246s0361bl.pdf. Last accessed: December 2021. 15 U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Mirena (levonorgestrel-releasing intrauterine system). Prescribing Information. Available at: https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/drugsatfda_docs/label/2020/021225s0401bl.pdf. Last accessed: December 2021.