

Having a coil fitted at the time of caesarean section

Published in 26/05/2022

About this information



This information is for you if you want to know more about having a contraceptive coil inserted into your womb at the time of a caesarean section. Intrauterine contraception, commonly known as a 'coil', is one of the most effective ways of preventing or delaying a further pregnancy for a long period.

Why might having a contraceptive coil inserted at caesarean section be good for me?

Your next pregnancy will be safer if you delay it by two years or more. After having a baby with caesarean section delayed pregnancy by at least one year will help your scar to heal.

Unplanned pregnancies are higher in the first few months after childbirth. You could get pregnant again as early as 21 days after having a baby.

Having a coil inserted at the caesarean section is convenient; you don't have to remember to use it before having sex. It is a safe, quick and pain-free procedure as you will already have anaesthetic for the operation.

Coils are very effective contraception; less than 1 in 1000 women become pregnant. Fertility returns immediately after removal.

Can I have a coil inserted at caesarean section if I am planning to breastfeed?

Both non-hormonal and hormonal coils are safe during breastfeeding and will not affect milk supply or quality.

Are there situations when insertion of a coil at caesarean section would not be advised?

Most women will be able to have a coil at caesarean section if they wish. You should not have a coil inserted at the caesarean section if:

- Your waters broke for 24 hours or longer before your caesarean section.
- You bleed heavily after birth a condition called Primary Post-Partum Haemorrhage, PPH.

- You developed sepsis in labour.
- You have a heart-shaped womb.

How will the coil be put in at caesarean section?

After the placenta is delivered, a coil will be placed through the opening made at the caesarean section in the womb. It takes a few minutes.

The threads attach to a coil and pass into the vagina through the neck of the womb. These threads are usually cut at your 6 week follow-up.

What should I expect afterwards?

As the womb contracts and returns to its pre-pregnancy size after having your baby (this takes about six weeks), the thread may need to be cut further.

A follow-up with vaginal examination is required at 6 weeks to check that the coil threads are visible. This can be done during your postnatal review, at your GP surgery, local family planning or sexual health clinic.

If the threads are not visible at 6 weeks check, you will be referred to have an ultrasound scan to confirm that the coil is still there. Lost thread does not affect how effective the coil is but can make its removal slightly more challenging.

Are there any risks from having a coil at caesarean section?

There is approximately 1 in 20 risks of the coil expelling (falling out) from the womb after insertion; this risk is slightly higher if the coil is inserted at a Caesarean section.

There is a 1 in 100 risk of infection in the womb in the first few weeks after insertion. This is not any higher than if the coil was not fitted at the caesarean section.

There is less than a 1 in 1000 chance of injury to the womb (perforation) at the time of insertion. This is not any higher than if the coil was not fitted at the caesarean section.

Further information

Two different contraceptive coils could be inserted at the time of your caesarean section:

1- Non-hormonal, Copper Coil such as T-safe- lasts 10 years and may cause heavier periods.

2-Hormonal Coil such as Mirena coil and Levosert lasts for 5 to 7 years and may cause lighter, irregular periods or no periods at all.

Leaflets about each different coil are available @ www.fpa.org.uk

- Your Guide to IUD leaflet
- Your guide to contraceptive choices after you've had your baby

Sources of evidence:

-Faculty of Sexual & Reproductive Healthcare, FSRH.
(Intrauterine Contraception guideline, Sep 2019).

-Faculty of Sexual & Reproductive Healthcare, FSRH.
(Contraception after pregnancy guideline, Oct 2020).

-Royal College of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists, RCOG.
(Best Practice in postpartum family planning, No.1. June 2015).