



# Smart alternatives to taking the Pill every day

Long-Acting Reversible Contraception

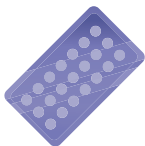
Free yourself of your  
daily pill reminders

#itsmychoice



The most commonly used forms of contraception in Ireland are<sup>1</sup>:

27% Pill



28% Condom



19% Long-Acting Reversible Contraception (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>

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 a group of contraceptives known as Long-Acting Reversible Contraceptives or LARC.

LARC is a term used to describe methods of contraception which are highly effective in protecting a woman from getting pregnant for an extended period of time. They are the most effective reversible methods of contraception because they do not depend on you remembering to take or use them to be effective.

Long-acting reversible contraception includes hormonal methods such as the hormonal coil/IUS, the injection, the sub-dermal implant, and non-hormonal methods such as the copper coil/IUD.

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>

Women in Ireland aged 17-35 can access long-acting reversible contraception for free.



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

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

**Long-acting  
contraception**  
SUPER EFFECTIVE



**IUS**

3-8 years



**Implant**

3 years



**IUD**

5-10 years



**Sterilisation**

forever



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

**Injection**  
3 months



## #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>

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

91%<sup>4</sup>

## Short-acting contraception

HIGHLY EFFECTIVE



**Pill**

*every day*



**Vaginal Ring**

*every month*



**Patch**

*every week*



72% –  
82%<sup>4</sup>

## Barrier and other methods

LESS EFFECTIVE



**Withdrawal**

*every time*



**Fertility Awareness**

*every day*



**Spermicides**

*every time*



**Cervical Cap, Diaphragm & Sponge**

*every time*



**Female & Male Condom**

*single use*



# LARC

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

**OVER  
99%**  
EFFECTIVE

***One of the most effective types of contraception.***

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

***LARC is available on prescription.***

Women aged 17-35 in Ireland can access the prescription of LARC and the insertion and removal of LARC for free.

For women of other ages, they can access LARC under the General Medical Scheme (GMS/Medical Card) and Drug Payments Scheme. Ask your Pharmacist for more information.

Can be used for a long time but can be removed anytime you wish.

***"Fit and Forget"*** 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.

An exception can be the injection which can delay a return to fertility.

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 & 8 years.



## *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.
- Insertion is usually well tolerated by most women.
- Removal is usually very quick and easy.



## *Consideration*

- 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.

**#DYK**

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

# Intrauterine Device

(IUD / COPPER COIL)



## *How do I use it?*

- 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 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.



## *Consideration*

- 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 3 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 oestrogen.
- Fertility returns to normal once the implant is removed.



## *Consideration*

- 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.
- Suitable for women who are breastfeeding, or who cannot or do not want to take oestrogen.
- Can reduce heavy, painful periods. Initial irregular bleeding may take a while to settle down. Some women may even stop having periods altogether.



## *Consideration*

- 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.
- 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?

*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 might be right for you.



## Talking about LARC?

*Here's how to start a conversation with your healthcare professional:*

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

“ What forms of long-acting contraception are available at your practice? ”

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

# Remember

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

*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.*



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)

## References

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