

Pain relief for coil fittings and removal

“Will fitting or removing the coil be painful?”

Although some women may feel nervous before, and some find a coil insertion painful, studies suggest the majority of women experience only mild or moderate pain/discomfort (rather than severe) during coil fitting, even without pain relief. A small study of 60 patients from Cripps Health Centre showed that the average anticipated pain level was 5-6/10, actually during the coil fitting was 4-5/10, which reduced to 2/10 soon after the fitting.

Pain from a coil fitting usually feels like lower abdominal cramps with some having lower back ache too, this can sometimes last hours to days.

Women who reported greater pain were often those who have never given birth, who have delivered only by Caesarean section, or those who regularly experience painful periods.

It is impossible to predict how each person will feel during the procedure, but the team will do their ultimate best to ensure you feel relaxed, supported, fully informed and that you are in control every step of the way.

Make sure you have these ‘over the counter’ painkillers at home

We recommend you take the following painkillers one hour before your procedure to provide you with pain relief during, and to take after the insertion or removal for a few days (following packet instructions).

You can take (as long as you are not allergic to any of the ingredients):

- Two 500mg tablets of paracetamol AND/OR
- One 400mg (OR Two 200mg tablets) tablet of Ibuprofen,

OR One 500mg tablet naproxen

During the procedure in the GP practice

We want you to feel as relaxed as you possibly can, and if it helps to bring along a friend/partner (who may be asked to wait for you outside the room during the actual fitting), or even listen to some music, then that’s fine with us. Some feel that chatting helps to distract, others prefer to meditate.

In addition to the recommended regular painkillers, the following pain relief methods are available from the healthcare professional fitting the coil (each clinician may have their own preference from experience):

- Local anaesthetic gel can be applied to the neck of the womb; this may potentially cause mild cramping
- Local anaesthetic spray can be used on the neck of the womb

The healthcare professional will discuss these options with you if further pain relief is necessary and check for any allergies. A trained health care assistant will also be present to help and support you throughout.

We do warn that there are 3 potentially uncomfortable moments during the coil fit which usually lasts 5-10 mins: 1. when safely stabilising the cervix, 2. checking the depth of the womb and 3. finally fitting the coil itself.

Removal in the GP practice

People usually do not find the removal of a coil uncomfortable; it is much quicker than insertion. If a new coil is wanted (as long as you have not had sex without a condom 7 days before an appointment) this can be inserted immediately after the previous coil is removed. The experience of the insertion of a new coil may be similar to the last coil but it also may be different.

(Adapted from FSRH statement: Pain associated with insertion of intrauterine contraception June 2021)