

Preparing for your Appointment

When you attend for your Mirena insertion ***you will need to bring the Mirena device with you.*** We do not stock Mirena's and cannot dispense them to you. The Mirena can be purchased from any pharmacy with a prescription. If you do not have a prescription for the Mirena, please contact your GP or telephone us on 9009 5255 as soon as possible so that we can send one out to you. We will only be able to send one out to you if you are an existing patient at this practice. Otherwise, your GP or other referring doctor will have to provide you with the prescription for the Mirena.

Most women experience only mild discomfort during and immediately after fitting the Mirena. Often women experience period-like cramping pain which usually settles within a few hours after your appointment.

To reduce the likelihood of any cramping pain we recommend the following:

If your appointment is in the morning (before 1:00pm): Take 2 Nurofen at approximately 8:00pm the night before your appointment. Take another 2 Nurofen and 2 paracetamol approximately 2 hours prior to your appointment.

If your appointment is in the afternoon (after 1:00pm): Take 2 Nurofen at approximately 6:30am on the morning of your appointment. Take another 2 Nurofen and 2 paracetamol approximately 2 hours prior to your appointment.

What is the Mirena?

Mirena is an effective, long-term and reversible method of contraception. It is also used for women who have heavy periods. These are the licensed uses for Mirena. It has been studied for use in women with pelvic pain, adenomyosis and endometriosis, with good results, though the device is not licensed for treatment of these conditions.

The Mirena device consists of a small plastic T-shaped frame with a central core which releases a very small amount of hormone (progesterone) daily. The device is inserted into the uterus, usually at your doctor's rooms by a gynaecologist or other doctor who has been trained in the insertion of the device. Mirena releases the hormone progesterone, which is one of the hormones found in the contraceptive pill. The particular progesterone in Mirena is levonorgestrel and there are both benefits and potential problems from this hormone.

The Mirena device has been demonstrated to be a very safe form of contraception and is fully reversible, meaning that pregnancy could be possible following its removal. The hormonal levels from the Mirena fall to normal within 48 hours of its removal and it is possible to become pregnant in the few weeks following its removal, since it does not stop the egg being released from the ovary (ovulation). If you do not want to become pregnant, then you will need to consider alternative forms of contraception at this time. You should speak to your doctor about whether or not the Mirena is the appropriate method of contraception for you.

When used to decrease heavy periods, the progesterone in the device is what will lead to the decrease in bleeding during periods. The amount of blood that is lost each period is reduced by approximately 50-75%. This means that there may still be periods, though they will be considerably lighter. After the device has been in for approximately 12 months, 1 in 3 women will have no periods at all. One of the other benefits is

that there is often a decrease in period pain and other types of pelvic pain when using the Mirena. The device is not licensed for this purpose, but this is usually a wanted side effect. This is how it is useful in women with painful conditions of the pelvis.

Side Effects

The most common side effect is that of irregular vaginal spotting. This can be a problem for some women and is the most common reason that women have their Mirena removed. Approximately 15-20% of women have their Mirena removed because they are having bleeding or other side effects. If you have any issues, then you should discuss these with your doctor. The spotting is usually troublesome without being dangerous and it is often worthwhile to leave the Mirena in place to see if the bleeding settles.

Other side effects can include weight gain (usually less than 2kg, though some women report substantial weight gain, which is a problem with all types of progesterone). Changes in the skin, particularly acne and oiliness can occur, as can depression. These side effects are less common than with other types of progesterone because the dose of progesterone in the Mirena is very low. If you have any of these side effects, you should discuss them with your doctor.

How Long does the Mirena Last?

The Mirena will continue to work for 5 years. It should be changed at the end of that time for a new one if ongoing contraception is required or there is still a potential for heavy periods. The Mirena can be removed prior to this if a pregnancy is desired or if there is any problem or side effects with the device.

Fitting the Mirena

Only your doctor can fit the Mirena. You will be given a prescription which you will need to fill at any pharmacy prior to your appointment. If you are having a Mirena fitted for the first time, your appointment will be scheduled either during your period or within seven days from the beginning of your period. If you are having an existing Mirena replaced with a new one, your appointment may be scheduled at any time during your cycle. You should not be alarmed by the size of the packaging. The box is very large, though this is for the insertion device and surrounding packaging. The device that goes into the uterus is much smaller.

Fitting the Mirena takes a few minutes and can be performed during a normal follow up appointment. Your doctor may perform an ultrasound to confirm the position of the Mirena inside your uterus.

You should be able to resume normal activities immediately after your appointment and will be able to drive.

The procedure may be uncomfortable (more uncomfortable than a Pap smear) since the cervix has to be slightly opened during insertion of the device. Often local anaesthetic is used to help decrease the pain, though this will cause stinging and there may still be the impression of stretching or discomfort during the procedure. It is strongly recommended that the procedure be done in the office rather than under anaesthetic, since there are more risks from an anaesthetic and hospitalisation.

Risks from the Insertion

There are only a few risks from the insertion of a Mirena. These include local discomfort and cramping pain which is usually controlled with pain medication as above. Occasionally, there can be a sensation of nausea and faintness during the procedure. This occurs because of stretch to the cervix and is a nerve reaction. If this happens, the procedure will be stopped and you will need to remain lying down until the sensation

passes in 5-10 minutes. Very occasionally, the sensation is very intense and the Mirena will need to be removed immediately. If this is the case, the device can be put in at another time.

Other risks are uncommon and include making a hole in the uterus (called a perforation), or bleeding. These problems are very rare. Infection is an uncommon problem with the device insertion and antibiotics are not required as a routine. Infection may occur in the first 2-3 weeks following the procedure and if you have vaginal discharge, bleeding and temperatures, you should contact us immediately on 9009-5255.

Following the Insertion

In the first few weeks following insertion occasional cramping pain and bleeding is very common. Simple pain medications such as those above should help to settle any discomfort. You need to check for the strings in the vagina following your first period. If you cannot feel them, you should contact your gynaecologist here or your local doctor and it may be necessary to examine you or perform an ultrasound to make sure that the Mirena has not become dislodged.

If you see that the Mirena has become dislodged, please contact us and remember ***you should use immediate contraception (such as condoms) to prevent a pregnancy.*** You can have follow up care with your general practitioner or as arranged here with your specialist.

Additional Information

If you have any other questions, please ask your doctor. Additional information about Mirena can be found in the booklet entitled "Your Questions Answered" available at your doctor's office, or at www.femalelife.com.au/mirena.

ALANA HEALTHCARE

T: 02 9009 5255