

# Long Acting Reversible Contraception (LARC)

## What is LARC and why is it important?

LARC is the abbreviation for long-acting reversible contraception. It is an effective and easy form of reversible birth control. There are two types of LARC, intrauterine devices (IUD) and implant. LARC methods, both hormonal and non-hormonal can be placed at any time, including right after giving birth or having an abortion, providing immediate contraception.<sup>1</sup> Patients are encouraged to talk with their healthcare provider about immediate postpartum intrauterine devices (IUDs). A LARC device can prevent pregnancy for 3 to 12 years after just one doctor visit.<sup>2</sup> Follow-up visits may be necessary. LARC is an ideal form of birth control for women who are not ready to have a child or another child right now but may like to do so in the future. It can be removed at any time and the ability to get pregnant is immediately restored. LARC is a leading choice for contraception for female Ob/Gyn physicians.

## How effective is LARC?

Abstinence is the only 100% effective form of birth control, however research has shown LARC to be 20 times more effective than birth control pills, the patch, or the vaginal ring.<sup>3</sup>

## What are the benefits of LARC?

First and foremost, LARC helps prevent unintended pregnancies. Some LARCs can also help improve health outcomes related to menstrual disorders. It has been effective in improving the side effects from anemia as well as preventing surgery related to issues caused by fibroids or endometriosis.

## What are the risks of LARC?

Depending on the type of LARC, some women have experienced side effects such as headaches, nausea, breast tenderness and mood changes. You should have a discussion about these with your healthcare provider. Serious complications related to the use of LARC are uncommon. Although LARC is highly effective at preventing unintended pregnancy, LARC methods do not protect against the transmission of sexually transmitted infections (STI) such as syphilis, chlamydia, HIV/AIDS, etc. Use a condom and routine STI testing to prevent STI spread.

## Does LARC cause pain or discomfort?

Most women experience some degree of discomfort during IUD insertion.<sup>4</sup> Your healthcare provider should discuss the possibilities of pain or discomfort that may occur during IUD insertion as well as options for pain management.



### References:

1. <https://ihpi.umich.edu/news/long-acting-reversible-contraception-highly-efficacious-safe-underutilized>
2. <https://www.urmc.rochester.edu/pediatrics/training/community-pediatrics-training/larc/what-is-larc.aspx>
3. <http://www.ashsexualhealth.org/understanding-larc/>
4. <https://www.acog.org/Clinical-Guidance-and-Publications/Committee-Opinions/Committee-on-Adolescent-Health-Care/Adolescents-and-Long-Acting-Reversible-Contraception?IsMobileSet=false>

