

**Advanced Practitioner Resources: Troubleshooting LARC**

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content:	Frequently Asked Questions for Clinicians_ Intrauterine Devices (IUDs)

**Overview**

This document contains the most frequently asked questions by CHOICE participants regarding the hormonal and non-hormonal copper IUDs; it also provides an answer guide with suggested responses based on the evidence and consensus of CHOICE clinicians.

QUESTION	ANSWER	EVIDENCE BASE
<p><b><i>I keep getting bacteria infections with my IUD. What can I do?</i></b></p>	<p>Bacterial Vaginosis (BV) is caused by a change in the normal acid-base balance of the vagina. Things that can alter the balance include: 1) blood; 2) ejaculate; or 3) other bacteria. IUDs do not cause BV. However, the hormonal IUD can cause an increase in irregular bleeding which can increase BV occurrence. There are many things you can do to prevent BV but two of the most helpful tips are to avoid douching and to avoid using an antibacterial soap to cleanse the vagina. Risk Factors for BV include: African American ethnicity, Sexual Activity and cigarette smoking.</p> <p><i>[If a CHOICE patient was contemplating removal because of BV, an appt. would be offered. At that time, evaluation for the presence of BV would be done. If positive, then counseling on good vulvar skin care guidelines would be done. Handouts given: CDC BV and good vulvar skin care guidelines. Rx would be given.]</i></p>	<p>Some women report increased vaginal discharge with the IUD; this is usually normal leukorrhea and not a sign of infection. <sup>1</sup></p> <p>“Irregular bleeding and the presence of intermediate vaginal flora are strong predictors of the development of BV. Irregular bleeding is a common side effect of the hormonal IUD. There are several potential mechanisms by which irregular bleeding could increase the risk of BV acquisition. Blood has a neutral pH which raises the pH of the normally acidic vagina. Association between menses and BV recurrence has been described with an increase in anaerobic bacteria and a decrease in lactobacilli. In addition, lactobacilli agglutinate to red blood cells which may result in a decreased vaginal lactobacillus concentration in women with frequent or persistent uterine bleeding.” <sup>2</sup></p>
<p><b><i>I’m having a lot more acne with my IUD. Is this</i></b></p>	<p>Each person reacts to hormones differently. Although it’s not very</p>	<p>Acne with the hormonal IUD is due to the systemic</p>

<p><i>normal?</i></p>	<p>common, some hormonal IUD users do report more acne. It is important to be on a good cleansing and moisturizing routine.</p>	<p>effects of levonorgestrel. If a patient was previously using an estrogen-containing method, she may notice an increase in acne after switching to an IUD. This is due to estrogen helping to reduce androgen production. Estrogen use causes testosterone production to decrease and sex hormone binding globulin to increase which then further binds any free testosterone.<sup>3</sup></p>
<p><i>I've tried the ibuprofen regimen but I'm still having irregular bleeding. Is there anything else I can try?</i></p>	<p><i>[One therapy for irregular bleeding is not necessarily superior to another. A clinician must take into account the individual health history when recommending one treatment versus another, ie, contraindications to estrogen, history of gastric bypass, etc.]</i></p> <p>Common regimens are:</p> <p><b>Over the Counter:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ibuprofen 600mg tablet tid x 5-7 days</li> <li>• Naproxen sodium 220mg tablet 2 tablets bid x 5-7 days</li> </ul> <p><b>Prescription:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Naproxen 500mg tablet 1 po bid x 5-7 days</li> <li>• Estrogen supplementation:</li> <li>• Conjugated estrogen 1.25mg 1 tablet po daily for 7-14 days</li> <li>• Micronized estradiol 2mg tablet po daily for 7-14 days</li> <li>• Transdermal estrogen patch 0.1mg for 7-14 days</li> <li>• Mefenamic acid 500mg tablet bid for 5-7 days</li> <li>• Tranexamic acid 500mg tablet bid for 5-7 days</li> <li>• Doxycycline 100mg tablet one po bid for 7 days</li> </ul> <p><i>[Once you prescribe the patient with a</i></p>	<p>It is not completely understood why progesterone only methods cause unscheduled bleeding. With the POPs, injection and implant, the inhibition of ovarian function results in a hypoestrogenic state, which inhibits endometrial proliferation and renders the endometrium less receptive to implantation. With the hormonal IUD, unscheduled bleeding is thought to be due to a relatively thick endometrium transitioning to a relatively thin endometrium. Then, the endometrium develops a dense network of small, thin-walled, dilated, superficial veins and capillaries, which are fragile and prone to focal bleeding. Irregular bleeding is an uncommon side effect with the copper IUD and usually does not occur after the first three months of use. NSAIDs and Doxycycline act</p>

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<p><i>What if the bleeding continues?</i></p>	<p><i>Have her check her strings. If they do not feel normal or she cannot feel them, she should make a clinic appointment for further evaluation. Some causes of</i></p>	

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<sup>1</sup> Dean, G., Goldberg, AB. Management of problems related to intrauterine contraception. In: UpToDate, Zieman, M(Ed), UpToDate, Waltham, MA, 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Madden, T, Grentzer, JM, Secura, GM, Allsworth, JE, Peipert, JF. Risk of Bacterial Vaginosis in Users of the Intrauterine Device: A Longitudinal Study. *Sexually Transmitted Diseases* 2012;39:217-222.

<sup>3</sup> Hatcher, RA, Trussell, J, Nelson, AL, Cates, Jr. W, Kowal, D, Policar, MS. *Contraceptive Technology*, (20<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York City (NY): Ardent Media, Inc.; 2011

<sup>4</sup> Hatcher, RA, Trussell, J, Nelson, AL, Cates, Jr. W, Kowal, D, Policar, MS. *Contraceptive Technology*, (20<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York City (NY): Ardent Media, Inc.; 2011

<sup>5</sup> Edelman, A, Kaneshiro, B. Management of unscheduled bleeding in women using contraception. In: UpToDate, Zieman, M(Ed) Waltham, MA, 2013.

<sup>6</sup> Bayer Health Care Pharmaceuticals. Mirena Package Insert. Wayne, NJ: Bayer Health Care Pharmaceuticals, Inc.: 2009

<sup>7</sup> Bayer Health Care Pharmaceuticals. Mirena Package Insert. Wayne, NJ: Bayer Health Care Pharmaceuticals, Inc.: 2009

<sup>8</sup> Bayer Health Care Pharmaceuticals. Mirena Package Insert. Wayne, NJ: Bayer Health Care Pharmaceuticals, Inc.: 2009