

Coil (intrauterine contraceptive device) retrieval

This leaflet explains what to expect when you come into hospital to have your contraceptive coil removed. If you have any queries please call the Radiology Department on 0118 322 7991.

What is a coil retrieval?

It is a specialised X-ray examination that produces a series of images that enables us to remove your coil. This is usually because previous attempts, either by your GP or nurse, have been unsuccessful, due to either the coil threads not being visible or the threads have broken.

The examination is done by a radiologist (specialist X-ray doctor), a radiographer and a helper. Please note that this is a training hospital and the X-ray Department does have students; although they may not be directly involved in your test, they may still be in the room.

On the day of your test

- Please bring your appointment letter with you.
- Your partner or a friend may accompany you; however, they will need to stay in the waiting room during the test.
- We recommend that you take a painkiller (such as paracetamol or ibuprofen) up to one hour before your appointment.
- This test can be performed at any time during your menstrual cycle.
- You can eat and drink normally on the day of your test.
- Please do not bring children with you. Children will not be able to come into the room with you when you have the test and there are no childcare facilities.

What happens during the coil retrieval?

When you arrive at the X-ray Department, we will ask you to change into a hospital gown. In the X-ray room you will lie on a couch and a speculum is inserted into the vagina (similar to having a smear test). A small dilator is passed through the cervix into the uterus and the retrievers are then used to grab the threads of the coil to remove it. We appreciate that this procedure requires privacy so we will make every effort to make you feel relaxed and comfortable.

During this test, you are given Entonox (gas and air) to use should you wish. You breathe this through a mouthpiece. It can be useful as it is a quick acting painkiller and the effects do not last long. It can make you feel a bit sleepy or sick while you are breathing it but this wears off quickly once the Entonox is stopped. It wears off as soon as you breathe it out, so you are safe to drive home afterwards.

At the end of the test, you are taken into the bathroom where you can wash and get dressed. Once changed, you may sit in the waiting room until you feel ready to leave the department.

How long will it take?

The examination should take between 20-30 minutes, although sometimes it is quicker.

Do I need to prepare for it?

No, there is no preparation required before you attend for the test.

Will it hurt?

No, it should not hurt, although you may experience some discomfort, which is why you should take painkillers beforehand and why you are offered the Entonox.

After the coil retrieval

You may experience some slight spotting or bleeding, which is normal, a sanitary towel will be provided or you may bring your own. If your coil is removed successfully, you no longer have a contraceptive device. Please use other forms of contraceptive to avoid unwanted pregnancy.

Are there any risks?

This test involves X-rays. The amount of radiation is kept to a minimum and is equivalent to the amount of background radiation you naturally receive over 1-3 weeks.

There is a very rare chance of the retrievers perforating your uterus, although there is a much higher risk of this happening when the coil is inserted (1:1000 during insertion).

Are there any alternative procedures?

There is no alternative procedure available in this Trust.

What happens if the test is unsuccessful?

Your referring doctor will receive a copy of the X-ray report, which will ask for you to be referred on to the Gynaecology Clinic to discuss removal under general anaesthetic.

Can I drive home afterwards?

Yes.

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Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

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