**Video transcript- The Intrauterine system (IUS)**

Thinking about contraception? Have you considered the intrauterine system or IUS?

In this short video, we will explain how it works, what it is used for, the advantages and disadvantages and how it is fitted.

The IUS is a small t-shaped device that is put into the womb. It is mainly used for contraception but can also be helpful to treat heavy periods. The IUS sits in the womb and releases progestogen hormone. This thickens the mucus produced by the neck of the womb and also causes the lining of the womb to thin, making it less likely to accept an egg.

It is over 99% effective. This means that less than 1 in every 100 women who have an IUS fitted will get pregnant over 5 years. Almost all women can have an IUS. Your doctor will probably ask you some questions just to check it is suitable for you. The IUS works for up to five years and most women find that their periods become much shorter, lighter and less painful. For some women it can cause their periods to stop altogether. It is also a low maintenance form of contraception, so is especially good for those who find it difficult to remember to take tablets every day.

Some women find the insertion of the IUS a little bit uncomfortable, but this is usually short-lived. It is also important to remember that the IUS does not protect you from sexually transmitted infections and it is therefore always advisable to use condoms when in a new relationship.

The IUS can be fitted by your GP or at a sexual health center. The appointment usually lasts 30 minutes. It is important that you do not have sexual intercourse in the 3 weeks before your IUS is fitted, unless you are using a reliable form of contraception. Before your IUS is fitted, you may be asked to do a pregnancy test. Some women can find the fitting a little bit uncomfortable, so taking painkillers half an hour before your appointment, can be helpful. The IUS can take up to 7 days to be effective, depending on where you are in your cycle. Everyone is therefore advised to use alternative forms of contraception during this time.

The risks associated with the IUS are very small. It is possible to cause a small amount of damage to the womb in the form of a small hole called a "perforation". This usually happens whilst inserting the IUS but is extremely rare and occurs in less than 2 in a 1000 cases. There is also a small chance of you getting an infection in the first 20 days after an IUS is put in, so you will be offered sexually transmitted infection screening before your IUS is fitted. After your IUS has been fitted, you are advised to have a follow-up appointment 3-6 weeks later. This is to check that your IUS is still in place, and can be done at your GP or sexual health center.

The IUS can be removed at any time. As soon as it is removed, your fertility will return to what is normal for you. The IUS has no lasting effects on your fertility once it has been removed.

If you would like any more information, or would like to discuss other methods of contraception, please contact your GP or local sexual health center.

www.unitysexualhealth.co.uk