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Levonorgestrel Intrauterine System Guideline (LNG-IUD)

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Abbreviations

IUC	Intrauterine Contraception
LNG-IUD	Levonorgestrel Intrauterine System

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Introduction

Levonorgestrel intrauterine systems (LNG-IUD) consist of a T-shaped device with an elastomere core which releases levonorgestrel. The contraceptive effects are local as a result of endometrial suppression which prevents implantation and changes to the cervical mucus and utero-tubal fluid, which impairs sperm migration and penetration.

Efficacy

- The failure rate of LNG-IUD use is very low.
- The pearl index (pregnancies per 100 woman years) is 0.06 for the Mirena®, 0.29 for Kyleena® and 0.33 for Jaydess®.
- Pregnancy rates for Levosert® over first five years of use is similar to published data on Mirena®
- The ectopic pregnancy rate with the 52mg-LNG-IUD is reported as 0.02 per 100 women years, 0.08 for the Cu-IUD, 0.11 for Jaydess® and 0.2 for Kyleena®

Key Differences between available devices

The LNG-IUD is not recommended for post-coital use as emergency contraception.

	Mirena®	Levosert®/ Benilexa®	Kyleena®	Jaydess®
Levonorgestrel content	52mg	52mg	19.5mg	13.5mg
License duration	8 years	8 years	5 years	3 years
Licensed for Contraception	YES	YES	YES	YES
Licensed for heavy menstrual bleeding	YES	YES	NO	NO
Suppression of ovulation	Up to 25% experience suppression of ovulation.			Minimal effect on ovulation
Licensed for endometrial	YES (4 years – see below*)	NO	NO	NO

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protection				
Cost (FSRH)	£88	£66	£76	£69.22
Cost per year over period of license (£/year)	£11	£11	£15.2	£23.02
Colour of threads	Brown	Blue	Blue	Brown
Silver ring for improved visibility on USS	No	No	Yes	
Release rates and serum levels		Similar to Mirena®	Lower than Mirena®	
Reduction in menstrual loss and onset of amenorrhoea		Similar to Mirena®	Less likely than Mirena® (may appeal to those who prefer to have a more regular bleeding pattern)	
Frame size and insertion tube diameter	32mm horizontal width 32mm vertical length 4.4mm insertion tube diameter	minute structural differences to Mirena® 4.8mm insertion tube diameter Minimum uterine cavity length of 5.5cm	28mm horizontal width 28mm vertical length 3.8 mm insertion tube diameter (maybe a theoretical advantage in terms of ease of fitting and less pain associated with insertion).	
Insertion techniques	One-handed technique	Two-handed technique, with a similar introducer to the Nova-T	One-handed technique	

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Potential Non Contraceptive Benefits of the LNG-IUD

Menorrhagia: Both Mirena® and Levosert® can reduce menstrual loss by over 90% and can be used as a first line option to treat menorrhagia after appropriate investigation in keeping with local protocols / guidelines for the Management of Heavy Menstrual Bleeding

Fibroids: Both Mirena® and Levosert® can be effective in management of menorrhagia even in the presence of fibroids but use is not generally recommended if fibroids are distorting the uterine cavity.

Dysmenorrhoea / pelvic pain: Both Mirena® and Levosert® may reduce the pain associated with primary dysmenorrhoea, endometriosis or adenomyosis.

***Mirena® Use as Progestogen Component Of HRT:** Mirena® is licensed in the UK for protection from endometrial hyperplasia during oestrogen replacement therapy for up to 4 years. The FSRH support the use of the Mirena® for up to five years (outside product license for this purpose). Neither Levosert® nor Benilexa® are licensed for endometrial protection but their use for this is supported by the FSRH.

Medical Eligibility

Hypersensitivity to the active substances or any of the excipients is a contraindication to use of the LNG-IUD. Please see [UKMEC](#).

LNG-IUD use in specific patient groups

- The use of intrauterine methods should not be restricted based on age or parity alone
- **Post Abortion:** There is evidence that immediate post abortion insertion reduces the number of subsequent unwanted pregnancies and repeated abortions (refer to 'Timing of Insertion'). People should be informed of the small increase in the risk of expulsion following immediate or early insertion post abortion.
- **Cardiac Disease:** The decision to use IUC should involve a cardiologist. The IUD should be fitted in hospital setting if a vasovagal reaction presents a particularly high risk for example those with a single ventricle, Eisenmenger physiology, tachycardia or pre-existing bradycardia. Likewise fitting should also be in hospital setting in those with known long QT syndrome since cervical stimulation during insertion can cause a vasovagal reaction with an increased risk of a cardiac event.
- **Immunocompromised** No evidence on the risks of infection due to drugs that affect the immune system.
- **Systemic steroids** If on long term systemic steroids, advice should be sought from the person's physician regarding the need for increased steroid treatment prior to IUC insertion (may be a greater risk of cardiovascular collapse during IUC insertion)

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- **Breast cancer** Non hormonal contraception is most appropriate. Any consideration of the LNG-IUD should be carried out within consultation with a cancer specialist.
- **SLE** Increased risk of a number of cardiovascular conditions such as ischaemic heart disease, venous thromboembolism and stroke. The advantages of LNG-IUD, irrespective of antiphospholipid antibody status, generally outweigh any theoretical or proven risks.

Side Effects/Risks

- Benilexa®, Mirena®, Levosert®, Kyleena® and Jaydess® have similar side effects profiles (such as acne, breast tenderness/ pain and headache) and **hormonal side effects** often settle with time. Rates of discontinuation due to side effects are not significantly different from Cu-IUD users.
- **Libido** Existing evidence fails to support a negative effect.
- **Weight gain** has been observed with intrauterine contraceptive use but there is no significant difference between hormonal and non-hormonal methods and evidence to support a causal association is lacking
- **Pelvic Infection:**
 - Studies examining a relationship between intrauterine contraception use and PID are subject to limitations, bias and confounding and good evidence is lacking
 - In intrauterine contraception PID appears most strongly related to the insertion procedure and the background risk of STIs.
 - A review of a number of studies identified a low rate of PID (1.6 per 100 women years). A six fold increase of PID was reported in the 20 days after insertion. After this time the risk was low unless there was exposure to STIs.
- **Displacement or expulsion** is the commonest cause of intrauterine contraceptive failure. The risk of this happening is around 1 in 20 and is most common in the first year of use, particularly within three months of insertion.
- **Ectopic Pregnancy:**
 - The overall risk of ectopic pregnancy is very low with LNG-IUD use because of its very high efficacy in preventing pregnancy
 - If pregnancy does occur with an intrauterine method in situ, the risk of an ectopic occurring is increased and in some studies half of pregnancies that occurred were ectopic.
 - Further research is required to clarify the ectopic risk for Kyleena® relative to other LNG-IUD but current studies report ectopic pregnancy rate with the 52mg-LNG-IUD of 0.02 per 100 women years, 0.08 for the Cu-IUD, 0.11 for Jaydess® and 0.2 for Kyleena®
 - Intrauterine contraceptive users should be informed about symptoms of ectopic. The possibility of ectopic pregnancy should be considered in those with an intrauterine method who present with abdominal pain

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especially in connection with a missed period or if an amenorrhoeic person starts to bleed. If a pregnancy test is positive, an ultrasound scan is urgently required to locate the pregnancy.

- The risk of **uterine or cervical perforation** associated with intrauterine contraception insertion is less than 2 per 1000 insertions and it is approximately 6 fold higher in those who are breast feeding.
- **Bleeding**
 - In the first 3-6 months of LNG-IUD use people may experience irregular, prolonged or frequent bleeding.
 - After one year of LNG-IUD use, infrequent bleeding is usual and some experience amenorrhoea.
 - Data from trials suggest Kyleena® and Jaydess® users have a lower rate of amenorrhoea although there is still a trend towards less bleeding with time.
 - People should be advised to seek medical advice, to exclude infection and gynaecological pathology if menstrual abnormalities (apart from those who develop amenorrhoea or oligomenorrhoea) persist beyond the initial 6 months of use. Likewise someone who has developed a very acceptable bleeding pattern which then deteriorates should also seek medical advice.
- **Benign ovarian cysts** may develop whilst using the LNG-IUD, most are asymptomatic and resolve spontaneously.
- **Bone mineral density** No evidence to suggest effect.
- **Return to fertility** after LNG-IUD use is generally similar to fertility rates after discontinuation of oral contraceptives and barrier methods.
- **Enzyme inducers** No evidence of reduced efficacy.

Assessment of Client Suitability

Accurate information and empathic counselling is the key to user acceptability.

Clinical history taking and examination allow an assessment of medical eligibility for LNG-IUD use. In this context the history should include: relevant social, medical, sexual (to assess risk of STIs), family and drug history as well as details of reproductive health and previous contraceptive use. With this information clinicians can advise on the appropriate contraceptive options taking account of both medical and social factors.

Investigations such as a full blood count, pelvic ultrasound and endometrial biopsy may be indicated prior to or at the same time as LNG-IUD insertion in those with heavy menstrual bleeding. Clinicians should be guided by local and national guidelines on the management of heavy menstrual bleeding.

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They can be encouraged to watch an eight minute film produced by Lothian Sexual Health available online which gives information about intrauterine methods of contraception.

<https://www.wossexualhealthmcn.org.uk/west-of-scotland-managed-clinical-network/resources/patient-information-leaflets.htm>

Counselling should include a discussion about discomfort during/or after LNG-IUD insertion and possible benefits, side effects and risks.

STI risk assessment should be performed for all those considering an LNG-IUD and testing should be undertaken in those at higher risk of STIs (age < 25 years or if they are 25 years or older and they have a new sexual partner or more than one sexual partner in last year, or if their regular partner has other sexual partners, a history of STIs, attending as a previous contact of an STI or has alcohol / substance abuse). Testing should also be done in those who request it.

People with epilepsy, are likely to require local anaesthetic or who have had a previous failed insertion at another clinic should be referred to a clinic with more experienced staff specialising in difficult LNG-IUD insertion.

Situations where it may be more appropriate to delay LNG-IUD insertion or give antibiotic prophylaxis.

- People with symptomatic pelvic infection should be tested, treated and insertion delayed until symptoms resolve.
- Asymptomatic gonorrhoea or chlamydia infection should be treated before insertion. If it is not possible to delay insertion, it may be acceptable to treat asymptomatic chlamydia infection at the time of insertion.
- In asymptomatic people attending for insertion of a LNG-IUD there is no need to wait for STI results or **routinely** provide prophylactic antibiotics provided the person can be contacted and treated promptly.
- There is no indication to routinely test for lower genital tract organisms (such as Group B streptococcus or bacterial vaginosis) in those who are asymptomatic.
- If bacterial vaginosis or candida infection is diagnosed or suspected the infection should be treated and the LNG-IUD insertion inserted without delay.
- Cases of Group A Streptococcus have been reported post IU inserted. Such cases are rare but can include life threatening septicaemia, invasive Group A Streptococcus (such as necrotising fasciitis) and Streptococcal toxic shock syndrome. If a person is found to have Group A streptococcus in the vagina they should be treated and the LNG-IUD insertion delayed. In addition people using an intrauterine method should be advised to seek medical advice if they experience signs or symptoms of infection.

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- NICE guidelines recommend that antibiotic prophylaxis against infective endocarditis is no longer recommended for people for defined interventional procedures. This does not exclude antibiotics on a case by case basis. If there is suspected infection at the site of the genitourinary procedure an antibiotic that covers the organisms that cause infective endocarditis should be considered.

Timing of Insertion

Circumstances	Timing of insertion	Additional precautions
All circumstances	Any time in the menstrual cycle if reasonably certain they are not pregnant or at risk of pregnancy (outside product license after day 7)	Yes required for 7 days unless inserted in the first 7 days of the menstrual cycle
Post-partum incl caesarian section and breast feeding	Any time after 4 weeks post-partum and it is reasonably certain they are not pregnant or at risk of pregnancy (outside product license which says 6 weeks)	Yes required for 7 days unless inserted in the first 7 days of the menstrual cycle of if fully meeting lactation amenorrhoea method criteria
Following abortion (all induced or spontaneous < 24 weeks gestation), ectopic pregnancy and miscarriage	<p>Post-surgical abortion: ideally should be inserted at the end of the procedure</p> <p>Post medical abortion: can be fitted at any time after completion of the second part (i.e. after the passage of products of conception confirmed by clinical assessment and or / local protocols. Note some services offering early medical discharge (products passed at home) opt to insert in those with a negative pregnancy test at the time of the follow up visit 2 to 3 weeks post abortion (provided no risk of further pregnancy since abortion)</p> <p>Post ectopic pregnancy and miscarriage: ideally should be inserted immediately after treatment for ectopic pregnancy or miscarriage</p>	If an LNG-IUD is fitted after day 5 post abortion, ectopic pregnancy and miscarriage additional precautions required for 7 days.

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Following administration of oral EC	Should not be inserted until pregnancy can be excluded	
CHC	Week 2 or 3 of CHC cycle or day 1 of hormone free interval	No, provided the CHC used correctly for the 7 days prior to insertion
	Week 1 of CHC cycle	Continue CHC for 7 days provided no contraindications (some patients may prefer to continue the CHC until end of this cycle of use)
	Day 2 to day 7 (inclusive) of hormone free interval If it is anticipated they will be on day 2 to day 7 (inclusive) of hormone free interval at the time of insertion they should be advised ahead of time to omit the pill free interval, and provided the CHC used correctly for the 7 days prior to insertion then no additional precautions needed post insertion	Restart CHC and take for 7 days provided no contraindications (having started a new cycle of CHC some patients may prefer to continue the CHC until the end of this cycle of use)
POP	At any time	Continue POP or use additional contraception for 7 days
Progestogen only implant	Up to 3 years post insertion	No
	From 3 years – provided reasonably certain the person is not pregnant or at risk of pregnancy	Yes, 7 days
Progestogen only injection	≤ 14 weeks post injection	No
	>14 weeks since last injection provided reasonably certain the person is not pregnant or at risk of pregnancy	Yes, 7 days
Barrier methods	Day 1 -7 of the menstrual cycle	No

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	After day 7 of the menstrual cycle provided reasonably certain the person is not pregnant or at risk of pregnancy, also refer to local protocols since some services choose not to consider barrier methods as reliable contraception	Yes, 7 days
Cu-IUD	Any time, additional precautions are also advised in the 7 days before changing in case the LNG-IUD cannot be inserted.	Yes, 7 days

A provider can be reasonably certain the client is not currently pregnant if they have no symptoms or signs of pregnancy and meets any of the following criteria:

- Has not had intercourse since last normal menses
- Has been correctly and consistent using a reliable method of contraception
- Is within the first 7 days of the onset of a normal period
- Is not breastfeeding and less than 4 weeks from giving birth
- Is within the first 7 days post-abortion or miscarriage
- Is fully or nearly fully breast feeding, amenorrhoeic, and less than 6 months postpartum.

NB. In addition to the conditions mentioned above, clinicians should also consider whether there is at risk of becoming pregnant as a result of UPSI within the last 7 days

The Insertion Procedure

- Clinicians inserting IUC should hold the appropriate letter of Competence in Intrauterine Techniques or have achieved the equivalent recognised competences and show evidence of recertification / reaccreditation.
- The manufacturer has previously recommended a Mirena® is inserted in a uterus between 6cm and 10cm in length. The manufacturer does not give equivalent information for Kyleena® or Jaydess® but it should be noted Jaydess®
- is only 2mm shorter in length. This does not imply an LNG-IUD should never be used in someone with a uterus that is shorter or longer than recommended.
- The manufacturer of Mirena® has previously advised insertion in a uterus less than 6cm may be associated with a greater risk of expulsion, perforation, pain, bleeding or pregnancy. In addition, if a uterus sounds to less than 6cm, consideration should be given to the possibility that it may be incorrect with the risk of non fundal placement.

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Interventions that ease LNG-IUD insertion

- Factors that predict pain during insertion include nulliparity or no history of vaginal delivery, anxiety, and length of time since last pregnancy or last menses.
- Oral analgesia prior to insertion is commonly recommended but evidence suggests oral ibuprofen at does up to 600mg has been shown not to reduce pain.
- Local anaesthetic topical spray is effective and should be offered if available
- Local anaesthetic block is not routinely required but should be available.

Documentation

- The patient record should be completed or updated as required.
- Name of chaperone should be recorded.
- Details of the insertion procedure including the name, batch number and expiry date of LNG-IUD inserted should be recorded.
- Details of local anaesthetic used, if any including batch number and expiry date should be recorded.
- Permission should be sought as to whether the client's GP can be notified

Advice following Insertion

- They should be informed what device has been inserted and when it needs to be removed / replaced. Clients should be given written information on the method.
- Insertion of an LNG-IUD may cause pain and discomfort for a few hours and they should be informed about appropriate pain relief.
- A routine follow up visit is not essential and it may be more important to advise them as to the signs and symptoms of infection, perforation, expulsion, pregnancy and returning if they have any problems. If they are unable/or do not feel comfortable checking their threads after 4-6 weeks a routine appointment can be made for a coil check.
- They should be informed of the symptoms of pelvic infection (for example pain, dyspareunia, abnormal discharge and fever) and advised as to how and where to seek medical help if these occur particularly in the first three to four weeks after insertion. The person should be informed about the use of additional precautions for protection from STIs and advised on the appropriate timings of STI testing after unprotected sexual intercourse.
- Patients at increased risk of developing infective endocarditis should already be familiar with symptoms that may indicate infection. Any episode of infection in people at risk of infective endocarditis should be investigated and treated promptly to reduce the risk of endocarditis developing.
- They should be informed about how to check for the presence of LNG-IUD threads and encouraged to do this regularly with the aim of recognising expulsion / perforation. If threads cannot be felt they should be advised to use additional contraception until they seek medical advice. Likewise if they can feel the stem of

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the LNG-IUD they should also seek medical advice and use additional contraception. Consideration may also have to be given to the use of emergency hormonal contraception.

- They should be advised to seek medical help (to exclude ectopic pregnancy) if they develop abdominal pain, especially in connection with a missed period or bleeding after amenorrhoea.
- In addition, they should be advised to seek medical assistance at any time if they develop persistent menstrual abnormalities (apart from the gradual onset of amenorrhoea or oligomenorrhoea) as this may indicate the presence of an STI, pregnancy or gynaecological pathology.
- They should be informed about the use of additional precautions for protection from STIs and advised on the appropriate timings of STI testing after unprotected sexual intercourse.
- There is no reason for the LNG-IUD to be removed in people who are undergoing Magnetic Resonance Scanning.

Problems Associated with LNG-IUD usage

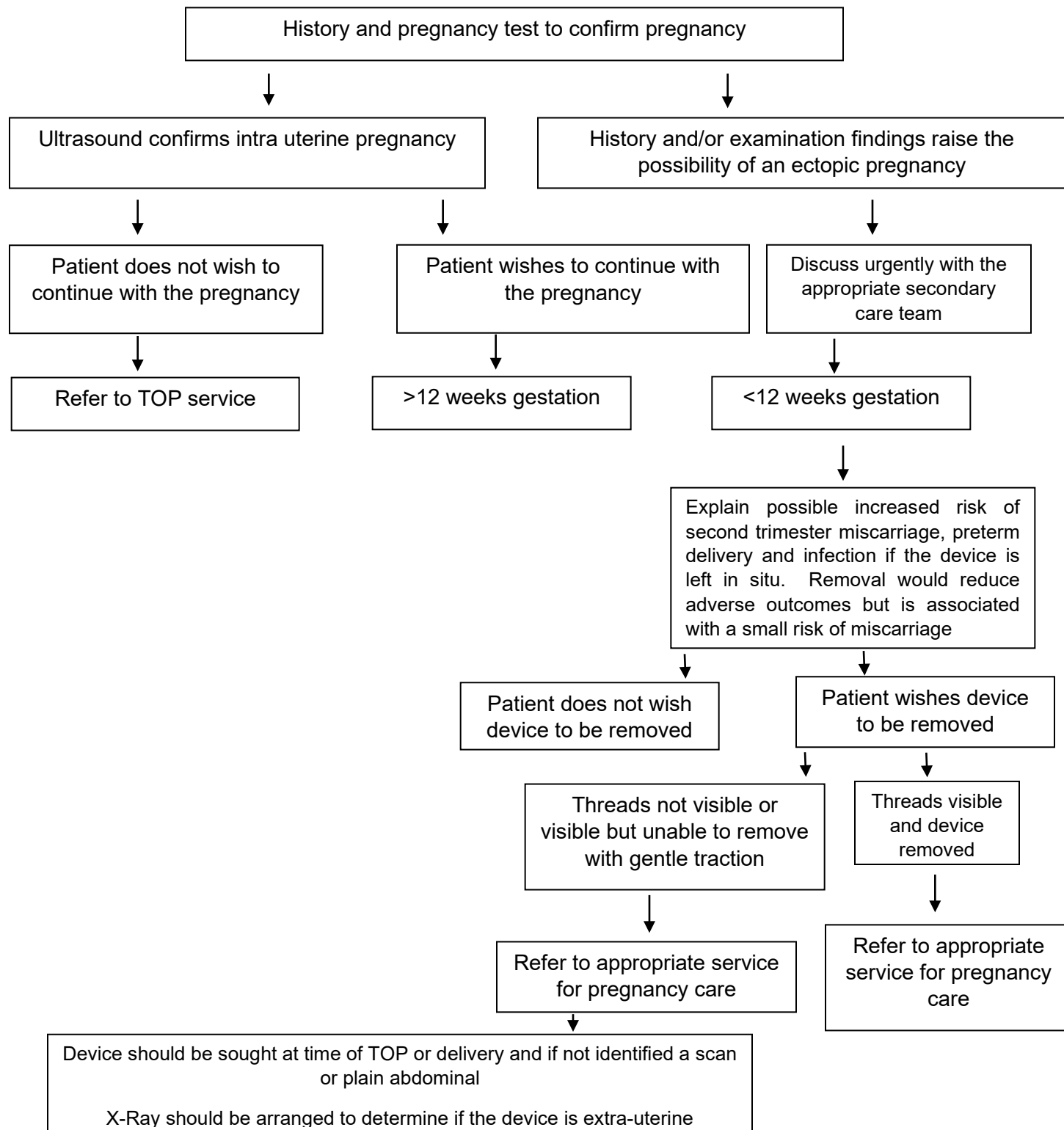
Abnormal bleeding	<p>Common in the first 3-6 months after insertion. May indicate the presence of an STI, gynaecological pathology or pregnancy and when appropriate should be investigated accordingly.</p> <p>If persists beyond the first 6 months gynaecological pathology should be excluded.</p> <p>A change in pattern of bleeding (apart from gradual onset of amenorrhoea or oligomenorrhoea) warrants further investigations to exclude infection, pregnancy and gynaecological pathology.</p> <p>There is no evidence for the most appropriate treatment option for unscheduled bleeding in people in which infection, pregnancy and gynaecological pathology has been excluded. For those who wish to continue the LNG-IUD and are medically eligible, a COC could be tried for up to three months (this can be the usual cyclic manner or continuously without a pill free interval – unlicensed use)</p>
Lost threads	See flow chart
Non fundally placed IUC	The decision to remove and replace a non-fundally placed IUC is a matter of individual clinical judgement following discussion with the person and consideration of their individual circumstances. There is limited evidence to allow for recommendations.

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Pregnancy	People who conceive with an IUC in situ are at greater risk of adverse pregnancy outcomes such as spontaneous abortion, preterm delivery, septic abortion and chorioamnionitis. From the limited evidence available removal of the IUC early in pregnancy may help improve outcomes. See flow chart to determine whether attempt should be made to remove the LNG-IUD and ongoing management.
Suspected pelvic infection	Someone with symptoms and signs suggestive of pelvic infection - start appropriate antibiotics. There is no need to remove the LNG-IUD unless symptoms fail to resolve within the following 72 hours or unless they wish removal. Arrange follow up to ensure: resolution of symptoms and signs, their partner has also been treated when appropriate, completion of the course of antibiotics, STI risk assessment, counselling regarding safer sex and partner notification.
Suspected perforation	<p>A recent review of the reported cases of uterine perforation found that only 8% were suspected or detected at the time of insertion</p> <p>If suspected at the time of insertion the procedure should be stopped and vital signs (blood pressure and pulse rate) and level of discomfort monitored until stable. Management needs to be discussed with a senior clinician.</p> <p>A history of mild abdominal pain, 'lost threads', changes in bleeding and a history of pain at the time of insertion) may suggest perforation when a patient attends for follow up.</p> <p>When there is any possibility of perforation at the time of insertion or later, an ultrasound scan (USS) and then if indicated a plain abdominal and pelvic X ray to locate the device should be arranged. They should be advised to use additional contraceptive precautions in the interim.</p>
Presence of actinomyces-like organisms (ALO)	LNG-IUD users with ALO detected on a smear who have no symptoms should be advised there is no reason to remove the LNG-IUD unless signs and symptoms of infection occur. There is no indication for follow-up screening. If symptoms of pelvic pain occur they should be advised to seek medical advice: other causes of infection (in particular STIs) should also be considered and it may be appropriate to remove the LNG-IUD.

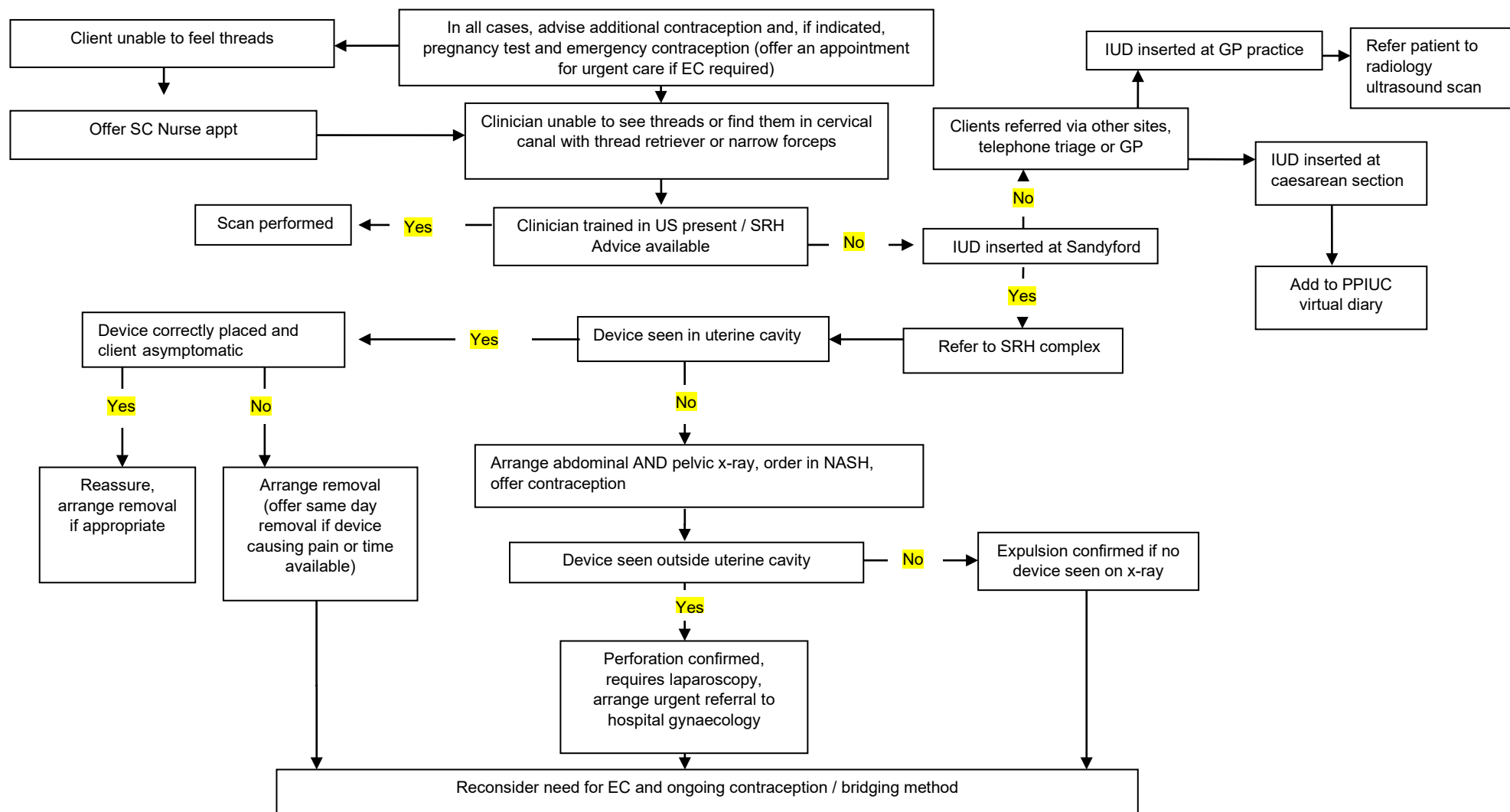
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Management of a pregnancy in someone using intrauterine contraception



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Sandyford Protocol for Management of Missing IUD Threads



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* There should always be an SRH consultant on the rota as 'SRH Advice' and they should be contacted if the client is in Sandyford Central Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm.

N.B. Clients returning for removal of an IUD/ LNG-IUD with missing threads will need an appointment in a SRH complex clinic, not a routine 20 minute or IUD list.

Timing of Removal / Replacement of LNG-IUD

Reason for removal	Recommendation for removal
For a planned pregnancy	Offer pre pregnancy advice regarding lifestyle, diet, folic acid, rubella immunity, vitamin D then removal at any time in the cycle when the person is ready to conceive
When removal is within the licensed duration of use and alternative method is chosen.	Avoid intercourse or use another method of contraception for at least 7 days before removal. Advise contraception thereafter.
When replacement is within the licensed duration of use	Advise condoms for at least 7 days before the procedure in case reinsertion is not possible
When use or replacement is outwith the licensed duration of use	<p>People who are under 45 at the time of Mirena® insertion and who present for replacement more than 8 years after insertion should be delayed until they have a negative pregnancy test at least 3 weeks after the last unprotected sexual intercourse.</p> <p>A Mirena® inserted ≥45 can remain <i>in situ</i> until age 55 if used for contraception or heavy menstrual bleeding even if the person is not amenorrhoeic.</p> <p>Contraception can be stopped age 55 as the risk of pregnancy is extremely low even in those still experiencing menstrual bleeding. For personal reasons, an individual may wish to continue using a LNG-IUD beyond this age for reasons relating to perceived non-contraceptive benefits. The LNG-IUD should ultimately be removed as those devices left <i>in situ</i> may be a focus for complications in later years.</p> <p>If someone using LNG-IUD over 50 wishes to stop before age 55,</p>

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	<p>FSH level can be checked. If FSH level is >30 IU/L the LNG-IUD can be discontinued after 1 more year. If FSH level is in premenopausal range then method should be continued and FSH level checked again 1 year later.</p> <p>Those who are using LNG-IUD for endometrial protection in an HRT regimen must have their device changed every 5 years.</p> <p>There is insufficient evidence at present to recommend using Levosert®. Kyleena® or Jaydess® beyond their licensed duration. Those who have Levosert®, Kyleena® or Jaydess® in situ beyond their licensed duration should be advised to use additional precautions until pregnancy can be excluded after which a replacement device can be inserted.</p>
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Management of patients following PPIUC (Postpartum Intrauterine Contraception)
Background:

Postpartum intrauterine contraception or 'PPIUC' refers to the insertion of intrauterine contraception within 48 hours after delivery, either at time of caesarean section or following vaginal birth. As the expulsion rate is slightly higher, and a higher proportion of people are likely to have non-visible threads, they are advised to attend for a coil check, as opposed to self-checking for threads. They are advised to attend Sandyford services for a coil check approximately 4-6 weeks after insertion of PPIUC.

Referrals are emailed to ggc.postpartum.referrals@nhs.scot by the maternity services. Patients are sent an SMS inviting them to book online with a specific passcode for the PPIUC Clinic.

Referral details can be found in NaSH under MEDIA ITEMS: PPIUC REFERRAL.

Many people will be due their cervical screening, use this as an opportunity to perform opportunistic screening if needed.

Visible Threads:

If threads are visible and appropriate length, and patient has had no problems since insertion, then they can be reassured. No further follow-up is necessary.

Long Threads:

Threads are either not trimmed, or left longer, at the time of insertion of PPIUC, to allow for involution of the enlarged uterus. The threads may be longer in the vagina or may even protrude beyond the vaginal entrance.

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- If threads protrude beyond vaginal entrance, they can be trimmed to skin prior to speculum examination
- The threads can be teased from underneath the speculum blades with a cotton swab to allow for easier trimming
- Threads can be trimmed to standard length (2-3cm beyond cervical os)
- Unless the stem of the intrauterine contraception (IUC) is visible, or symptoms suggest possible partial expulsion, no further action is required
- US scan is not routinely required for long threads in this setting

Device at Cervix:

The expulsion rate after PPIUC is slightly higher, and a proportion of these may be partial expulsion. The patient may have had symptoms such as pain, particularly during intercourse.

- If the stem of the device is visible, remove at initial review provided there has been no unprotected sex within the past 7 days.
- If the device is removed, emergency contraception should be considered, and a plan made for ongoing contraception.
- If the patient wishes further IUC then an appointment for this can be arranged and an interim method of contraception should be arranged. **An appointment should be accommodated within 2 weeks.**

Patients can be appointed to:

- IUD list
- SC SRH PPIUC on a Monday AM
- SC UC with SRH support

Non-Visible Threads:

Due to the methods of insertion of PPIUC, up to 50% of people may have non-visible threads at initial review. The majority of devices will still be in-situ, but expulsion requires to be excluded. *Management at Initial Review:*

- Enquire as to whether there is any obvious history of expulsion, or symptoms suggestive of this (e.g. pain, particularly during intercourse)
- Arrange for follow-up US scan. **This should be within 2 weeks. If unable to accommodate please discuss with SRH Consultant On-Call.**
 - Appoint to either (see flow-chart)
 - SC SRH PPIUC Monday AM clinic
 - SC UC with SRH Support
- Arrange an alternative method of contraception in the interim

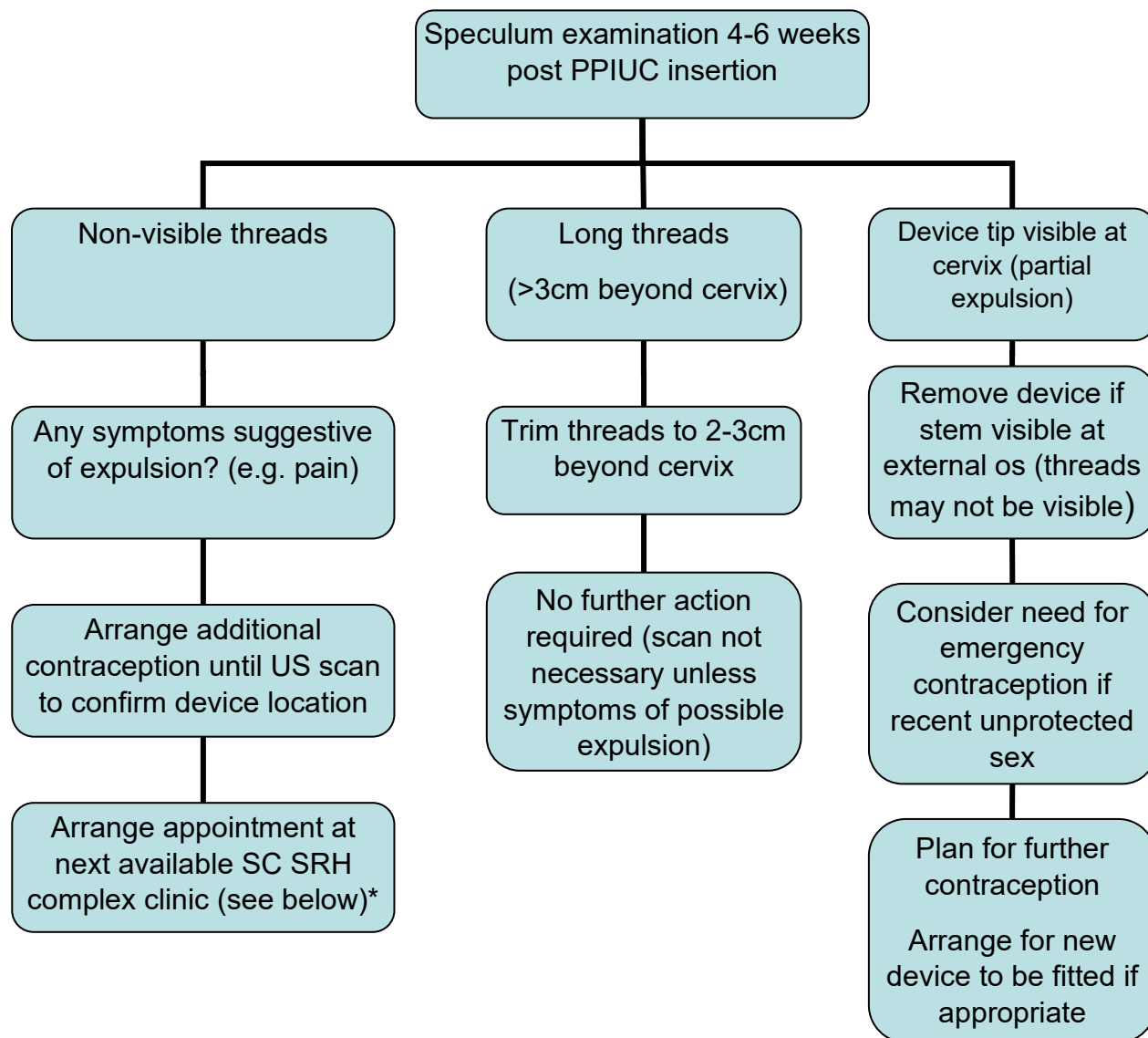
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Management in SRH Complex clinic

- If no device seen in uterine cavity on US scan, and no clear history of expulsion, arrange an abdominal/pelvic X-ray to exclude perforation. Consider ongoing contraceptive need.
- If no device seen on abdominal/pelvic x-ray, proceed to reinsertion of new device if patient wishes, no risk of pregnancy, and over 4 weeks post-partum.
- If device located within uterine cavity patient can be reassured and no further action required.
- People can be advised if threads do not become visible with time, they may require to return to Sandyford services to have device changed or removed when the time comes.

Adapted from West of Scotland Protocol

Flowchart: Thread Check Post Insertion of IUC at Caesarean Section or following Vaginal Birth



***Patients requiring USS to confirm device location should be appointed within 2 weeks to:**

- SC SRH PPIUC Monday AM clinic
- SC UC with SRH Support
- Please discuss with SRH Consultant On-call if any issues

Adapted from West of Scotland Protocol

References

[FSRH Clinical Guideline: Intrauterine contraception \(March 2023, Amended Jan 2025\) | FSRH](#) (assessed June 2025)

National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE). Prophylaxis against infective endocarditis; Antimicrobial prophylaxis against infective endocarditis in adults and children undergoing interventional procedures 2016
<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg64> [accessed June 2025]