

Menstrual cups are an increasingly popular alternative to pads and tampons due to their cost effectiveness and reduced environmental impact. There are many varieties of cup available but essentially they are designed to sit low inside the vagina and capture menstrual fluid.

Research is limited, and conflicting, as to whether menstrual cup use whilst an IUD is in situ may increase the risk of IUD expulsion (or partial expulsion). (1-3)

Some studies have demonstrated expulsions across all types of IUDs with concurrent menstrual cup use.(1, 2) Whilst the exact mechanism is unclear, there are two proposed theories for this finding:

- Menstrual cup removal may catch the IUD strings and the IUD be inadvertently removed; and
- The menstrual cup removal may apply a negative pressure to the cervix which would dislodge the IUD.

A 2019 systematic review and meta-analysis (3) did not find an increased risk for IUD expulsion within 6-8 weeks after insertion among menstrual cup users. (4)

Current Recommendations:

- There is insufficient evidence to universally avoid concurrent IUD and menstrual cup use.
- Routinely check type of menstrual product/s used at IUD discussion appointments and counsel individuals on the available data above.
- When removing a menstrual cup, it is important to release the vacuum seal of the cup before removing it. This can be done by placing a finger up the side of the cup towards its rim and squeezing gently. The cup can then be pulled out at an angle.
- Ensure IUD threads are not caught and inadvertently pulled with removal of the menstrual cup.
- IUD expulsion risk is greatest during the first 3 months post insertion, so consideration may be given to avoiding menstrual cup use during this time. (5)

Further research is underway and will guide future recommendations.

References

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4. van Eijk AM, Zulaika G, Lenchner M, Mason L, Sivakami M, Nyothach E, et al. Menstrual cup use, leakage, acceptability, safety, and availability: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Lancet Public Health*. 2019;4(8):e376-e93.
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