

Long-Acting Reversible Contraception (LARC)

Public Health Brief

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What is LARC?*

Long-Acting Reversible Contraception, or LARC, describes a specific category of safe, highly effective methods of preventing pregnancy. These methods can remain effective for 3-10 years once placed and can be removed at any time a patient wishes. LARC can only be placed and removed by a healthcare provider, but procedures can be completed in as little as five minutes.

There are currently three LARC methods that are 99% effective at preventing pregnancy:

- **Hormonal IUD:** a plastic T-shaped intrauterine device (IUD) placed in the uterus that releases the hormone progestin to prevent pregnancy.
- **Non-Hormonal IUD:** a copper T-shaped IUD placed in the uterus that prevents fertilization and implantation.
- **Implant:** a thin rod that is placed in the upper arm and releases the hormone progestin to prevent pregnancy.

Misconceptions

There are many misconceptions surrounding LARC methods, which is why it is important for patients to speak with their provider about any questions they may have.

STIs: LARC prevents pregnancy, but does not protect against Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs). Using LARC and a condom is the most effective way for sexually active individuals to prevent pregnancy and STIs.

Who: LARC can be effective for any person with a uterus that wishes to prevent pregnancy. IUDs are not only for women that have previously given birth.

HARFORD COUNTY DATA*

# of live births	2,623
# of teen pregnancies	69
# of pregnancy tests provided	251
# of LARC users	225
# of family planning visits	2,296

*HCHD Clinical Services provided, Fiscal Year 2018

SPOTLIGHT: LARC & Teen Pregnancy*

Providers and public health professionals have looked to LARC for the prevention of teen pregnancy. These long-lasting, effective, and safe methods are a first-line defense against unintended pregnancy, due in large part to how simple they are to place, leaving little room for "user error." Teen pregnancy has dramatically declined across the U.S. over the course of the past two decades, and research has linked this outcome to teens' access to effective contraception methods. Teenagers do not need parental consent for LARC placement, but a healthcare provider must place them and it is important that they speak with their provider concerning all their options for pregnancy prevention.

Accessing LARC

The majority of private and state Medicaid plans cover LARC placement. Those that have health insurance may only need to pay a one time co-pay fee. If someone is uninsured, they can contact the Maryland Children's Health Program (MCHP) of Harford County for assistance with obtaining medical assistance. HCHD's Clinical Services location in Edgewood provides Family Planning services and insurance assistance to clients.

HCHD Family Planning Clinic: 410-612-1779
MCHP: 410-942-7999



Copper
IUD



Hormonal
IUD



The
Implant

*Sources:
American Sexual Health Association.. 2019. Understanding LARC: <http://www.ashsexualhealth.org/understanding-larc/>
Maryland Department of Health. 2018. Maryland Vital Statistics Annual Report, 2017.
Guttmacher Institute. What is behind the declines in teen pregnancy? <https://www.guttmacher.org/gpr/2014/09/what-behind-declines-teen-pregnancy-rates>