

# Low Maintenance Contraception FAQs for Providers

## What is low maintenance contraception?

Low maintenance contraception, also called LARCs (long acting reversible contraceptives), include the etonogestrel (ENG) implant and hormonal and non-hormonal intrauterine devices (IUDs). They are the most effective reversible forms of birth control available, with more than 99 percent effectiveness.



Implant    Hormonal IUD    Non-Hormonal IUD

## What patients are best suited for a LARC?

Almost all patients are excellent LARC candidates. In fact, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that pediatricians should be able to educate adolescent patients about LARC methods, including the progestin implant and IUDs. Given the efficacy, safety, and ease of use, LARC methods should be considered first-line contraceptive choices for adolescents. The American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) also recommends IUDs and implants as first line birth control for most women and endorses LARC as the most effective reversible birth control methods available

to women and adolescents, including those that are not sexually active or are nulliparous.

## What are some of the barriers preventing patients from receiving a LARC?

For patients, barriers could be:

- Cost
- Concerns about privacy/confidentiality
- Lack of knowledge regarding options and where to get a LARC
- Persistent myths that LARCs are harmful or cause infertility
- Fear of side effects, fear of pain, fear of having something inside them

For providers, potential barriers may be:

- Beliefs that LARCs are too time consuming or will slow down office flow
- Upfront costs to stocking LARCs
- Required training for staff and providers
- Billing and reimbursement concerns
- Out of date protocols; Misinformation about LARCs
- Lack of necessary equipment
- Lack of knowledge about where to refer patients for LARC services if they do not provide them in the office



NATIONWIDE  
CHILDREN'S

*When your child needs a hospital, everything matters.<sup>SM</sup>*

## **My patient is not sexually active. Is a LARC right for her?**

Yes! LARCs are still recommended for women that are not sexually active. Obtaining a highly effective method of birth control, such as an IUD or implant, will ensure your patient is covered when they do become sexually active to prevent an unintended pregnancy.

In addition to pregnancy protection, LARCs can offer non-contraceptive benefits such as treatment of dysmenorrhea, heavy menstrual bleeding, and suppression of menses.

## **What does the AAP say about LARCs for teens?**

The AAP recommends that pediatricians should be able to educate adolescent patients about LARC methods, including the progestin implant and IUDs. Given the efficacy, safety, and ease of use, LARC methods should be considered first-line contraceptive choices for adolescents.

## **What does the ACOG say about LARCs for teens?**

The ACOG says that LARCs are safe and appropriate contraceptive methods for most women and adolescents. The LARC methods are top-tier contraceptives based on effectiveness, with pregnancy rates of less than 1 percent per year for perfect use and typical use. These contraceptives have the highest rates of satisfaction and continuation of all reversible contraceptives. Adolescents are at high risk of unintended pregnancy and may benefit from increased access to LARC methods.

When choosing contraceptive methods, adolescents should be encouraged to consider LARC methods. Intrauterine devices and the contraceptive implant are the best reversible methods for preventing unintended pregnancy, rapid repeat pregnancy and abortion in young women.

There are many opportunities for health care providers to provide LARC counseling during visits with sexually active adolescents, including preventive health, abortion, prenatal and postpartum visits.

Complications of IUDs and the contraceptive implant are rare and differ little between adolescents and older

women. Health care providers should consider LARC methods for adolescents and help make these methods accessible to them.

## **Who can provide LARCs?**

IUDs and implants may be inserted by a trained physician, physician's assistant, or advanced practice nurse (nurse practitioner or nurse midwife).

## **How can I learn more about providing LARCs for my patients?**

- Partner with an experienced LARC clinician to obtain hands on experience.
- Seek out training opportunities and continuing education, some may offer pelvic simulator experience.
- Contact the device manufacturers for training and more information:
  - Merck (Nexplanon®): <http://www.nexplanon-usa.com/en/hcp/services-and-support/request-training/>
  - Teva (Paragard®): <http://hcp.paragard.com/Resources/Videos.aspx>
  - Bayer (Mirena®, Skyla®): <https://www.whcsupport.com/>
  - Actavis (Liletta®): <https://www.lilettahcp.com/resources/placement>

## **Additional Resources:**

**American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)**  
<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/134/4/e1244>

**American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) LARC Program**  
[www.acog.org/About-ACOG/ACOG-Departments/Long-Acting-Reversible-Contraception/LARC-Program-Activities](http://www.acog.org/About-ACOG/ACOG-Departments/Long-Acting-Reversible-Contraception/LARC-Program-Activities)

**American Academy of Pediatrics**  
[www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org)

**US Medical Eligibility Criteria, Select Practice Recommendations for Contraceptive Use**  
[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

**NYC LARC Access Task Force**  
[www.larctaskforce.org](http://www.larctaskforce.org)

Association of Reproductive Health Professionals  
“You Decide Toolkit”  
[www.arhp.org/Publications-and-Resources/Clinical-Practice-Tools/You-Decide](http://www.arhp.org/Publications-and-Resources/Clinical-Practice-Tools/You-Decide)

Reproductive Health Access Project  
<http://www.reproductiveaccess.org/>

The Contraceptive Choice Project  
<http://choiceproject.wustl.edu/>

The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and  
Unplanned Pregnancy  
[www.thenationalcampaign.org/](http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/)

Nationwide Children’s Hospital BC4Teens –  
Birth Control for Teens  
[www.nationwidechildrens.org/bc4teens](http://www.nationwidechildrens.org/bc4teens)

LARC First  
[www.larcfirst.com](http://www.larcfirst.com)

Family Planning National Training Centers  
<http://fpntc.org/>

UCSF Intrauterine Devices and Implants: A Guide to  
Reimbursement  
<http://larcprogram.ucsf.edu/>

**To learn more about low maintenance contraception or refer a patient  
for an implant or IUD, visit [NationwideChildrens.org/BC4Teens](http://NationwideChildrens.org/BC4Teens).**

