

# Contraception and the Emmett IUD Thread Retriever



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The London School of Economics recently published a report (*"Fewer Emitters, Lower Emissions, Less Cost"*, October 2009) showing that contraception is the most cost-effective method of preventing climate change and almost 5 times cheaper than conventional green technologies. It pointed out that every US\$6.00 spent on contraception over the next four decades would reduce global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by more than a ton, whereas a minimum of US\$30.00 would

have to be spent on low-carbon technologies to achieve the same result. Little wonder then, that contraception remains one of the main topics of healthcare conversations around the world.

Globally, the Intra Uterine Device (IUD) and the hormone-releasing Intra Uterine System (IUS) are the most commonly used contraceptives, providing highly effective, reversible contraception with virtually no input from the user once fitted...apart from having to periodically "check the threads". A simple, but obviously a very important task.

When an IUD/IUS is fitted the threads attached to the base of its plastic stem are usually trimmed such that they protrude approx 1cm from the cervix into the top of the vagina. The woman is instructed to check that she can feel these threads on a monthly basis to reassure her that the IUD is still in its correct position.

The threads are used to remove the IUD at the end of its life so that it can be replaced; to enable conception; or when contraception is

no longer needed e.g. after the menopause.

At any one time approximately 7-9% of users report that they cannot feel the threads of their IUD and most will immediately seek medical assistance. The threads may have been drawn up into the cervical canal, or even into the lumen of the uterus itself by its muscular contractions. The device may also have been expelled unnoticed. More worryingly however the absence of threads may indicate the rare occurrence of uterine perforation where the device migrates either partially, or even completely, through the uterine wall into the abdominal cavity.

Faced with "missing threads", most clinicians in the UK would immediately reach for an Emmett IUD Thread Retriever. This small, sterile, single-use, disposable, plastic instrument was designed many years ago by Dr Charles Emmett, a dynamic British gynaecologist, and it really has stood the test of time.

To retrieve the missing threads, the slender stem is gently passed through the

cervix. Then the posterior, anterior and both lateral walls of the cavity are gently swept in turn with the notched edges of the Retriever, using a slight twisting action, as it is gradually withdrawn from the uterus. The threads become trapped in the notches and are simply brought back down through the cervix. In most cases neither analgesia nor anaesthetic is required and the complete procedure takes just minutes in any doctor's office. As the Emmett IUD Thread Retriever is a single-use device, there is no risk of cross-infection and no need for any sterilising equipment.

Once the threads are back where they should be, the woman may continue as before, knowing that her contraceptive cover continues, or the clinician can use them to remove the device if that is the required action.

## Distributors

Durbin PLC was pleased to acquire the manufacturing rights to the Emmett IUD Thread Retriever early in 2008 and is now actively seeking international distributors to enable more women worldwide to benefit from its minimally invasive reassurance. Alternatively, we are happy to supply individual clinicians wherever they practice.

It's nice to know that in promoting sexual health we are also doing our bit for the environment as well! **MEH**

**Durbin PLC** is a British company based in South Harrow, London. Established in 1963, the company specialises in supplying quality assured pharmaceuticals, medical equipment and consumable supplies to healthcare professionals and aid agencies in over 180 countries. As well as reacting rapidly to emergency situations, Durbin PLC responds to healthcare supply needs from local project level to national scale programmes.

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