

## WEBSITE REVIEWS

### Websites on methods of fertility regulation

The Standard Days Method™ (SDM) is appropriate for women with menstrual cycles between 26 and 32 days' duration. To use the method, couples avoid unprotected intercourse on Day 8 through to Day 19 of the woman's menstrual cycle. Many women who use the SDM also use a string of colour-coded beads, called CycleBeads™, to track their fertile days. The success rate is given as 95%. The site information is a little too enthusiastic for my taste, but you can download a pdf document about the method and make up your own mind about the pros and cons. There are links to testimonials and, of rather more use, to many resources of leaflets, training materials and courses. The site gives a large number of references for those who may be asked to talk or write about the subject. Website: <http://www.irh.org>

The CycleBeads used in the SDM have a website all to themselves. Again, I found the hard sell approach off-putting. The comment from a user that 'CycleBeads are natural. I don't want to put anything into my body' made my twisted sense of humour go into overdrive as I tried to imagine why she needed contraception! Website: <http://www.cyclebeads.com/>

This site has an interesting overview of the SDM. It places the method in its context and welcomes it as a simple addition for promotion in areas bereft of contraception possibilities. The author points out that the main advances for women using any contraceptive method are

increased knowledge, access and delivery, not how wonderful the method is. Any interested reader can follow up the long list of references. Website: [www.guttmacher.org/pubs/journals/2918803.html](http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/journals/2918803.html)

If you need a more general site to obtain other information about 'natural' methods of contraception (the methods that I prefer to call periodic abstinence) I can recommend this one. It gives detailed information and links to everything that you could wish to know. It is written in accessible language and can be recommended to both health professionals and clients. Website: <http://www.fertilityuk.org/>

### Websites for information on intrauterine systems

*Progesterone/progestogen releasing intrauterine systems for heavy menstrual bleeding.* (Cochrane Review) Lethaby AE, Cooke I, Rees M

Progesterone/progestogen-releasing intrauterine systems have not been compared to placebo or no treatment as this would be unethical. This Cochrane Review concluded that the levonorgestrel-releasing intrauterine system (LNG-IUS) is more effective than cyclical norethisterone (21 days) as a treatment for heavy menstrual bleeding. Women with a LNG-IUS are more satisfied and willing to continue with treatment but experience more side effects such as intermenstrual bleeding and breast tenderness. The LNG-IUS results in a smaller mean reduction in menstrual blood loss than transcervical resection of the endometrium (TCRE) and women are not as likely to become amenorrhoeic but there is no difference in the rate of satisfaction with treatment. Women with a LNG-IUS experience more progestogenic side effects compared to women having TCRE for treatment of their heavy menstrual bleeding but there is no difference in their perceived quality of life. Read

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the summary from the updated (2004) report at: <http://www.cochrane.org/cochrane/revabstr/AB002126.htm>

*Hormonally impregnated intrauterine systems versus other forms of reversible contraceptives as effective methods of preventing pregnancy.* (Cochrane Review) French R, Cowan F, Mansour D, et al.

No significant differences were found between the pregnancy rates for intrauterine devices (IUDs) with more than 250 mm<sup>2</sup> of copper and the levonorgestrel intrauterine system (LNG-IUS). However, the IUS was more effective at preventing pregnancy than IUDs with less than 250 mm<sup>2</sup> of copper. Continuation rates were similar, but the IUS was more likely to be removed for complaints of amenorrhoea, so users need to be aware and accepting of this beneficial effect. Read the summary from the 2004 report at: <http://www.update-software.com/abstracts/AB001776.htm>

*Non-contraceptive applications of the levonorgestrel intrauterine system.* Jensen JT. *Curr Womens Health Rep* 2002; 2: 417-422

This article is available in full and gives a useful overview of the non-contraceptive uses for the intrauterine system (IUS). The article reports the successful use for reducing heavy bleeding and dysmenorrhoea, and the increasing use in the perimenopausal woman for protection of the endometrium while oestrogen replacement therapy is used. You can click on any of the large number of references for further reading. Website: <http://www.biomedcentral.com/1534-5874/2/417>

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