

IUDs for Breast Cancer Patients

1. Should a breast cancer patient use a progestin releasing IUD?

There are two kinds of IUDs available: copper and levonorgestrel-releasing. In general, breast cancer patients should avoid the use of levonorgestrel-releasing IUDs. This is especially true for patients whose tumour was estrogen receptor (ER) and/or progesterone receptor (PR) positive. The answer is less clear for ER and PR negative tumours; however, since there is no clinically significant difference in pregnancy rate between the copper IUD and the levonorgestrel-releasing IUD, the copper IUD would be the choice with the least risk.

Although the hormonal effect of levonorgestrel-releasing IUDs is primarily on the endometrium, there is a low detectable serum concentration that is enough to cause systemic adverse effects in some patients. The effect on the risk for breast cancer recurrence is not known.

Therefore, a copper IUD is suggested for breast cancer patients choosing an IUD for contraception.