



OFFICE OF POPULATION AFFAIRS

# Cervical Cap

## THE FACTS



# Cervical Cap THE FACTS



## Quick Facts

### Effectiveness in Preventing Pregnancy:

- Of 100 women who use this method each year, about 17-23 are likely to get pregnant.
- The risk of pregnancy is much greater in women who have given birth vaginally or who do not use the cap consistently and correctly.

### Use

- Coat the inside of the cap with spermicide--a special jelly that kills sperm-- and put the cap in the vagina, covering the cervix, before having sex.
- It must stay in place at least six hours after sex and no more than 48 hours.
- The cap must fit tightly against the cervix.

### STI Protection:

- No

### Clinic Visit Required:

- Yes

## What is the Cervical Cap?

The cervical cap is a soft, latex or silicone cup with a round rim which fits snugly around the cervix. Cervical caps are sold under the name *FemCap*.



# Cervical Cap THE FACTS



## How does it work?

The cervical cap is placed inside the vagina and works by covering the cervix to prevent sperm from meeting with and fertilizing an egg. Before it is inserted into the vagina, the inside of the cervical cap must be covered with spermicide, a special jelly that kills sperm. The cap must fit tightly against the cervix to work.



To prevent pregnancy it is important to leave the cervical cap in place at least six hours after having sex, but it must be removed within 48 hours. It is NOT necessary to use more spermicide each time you have sex.

Read more about [spermicide](#).



## How do I get it?

Cervical caps require a prescription, come in different sizes, and must be fitted by a health care professional.

Once you have a prescription, you can buy a cervical cap and spermicide at a pharmacy. Spermicides are available over the counter.

To find a family planning clinic near you, go to <http://www.hhs.gov/opa/> and use the clinic locator.

## How effective is it?

Of 100 women who use this method each year, about 17-23 are likely to get pregnant. The exact risk of pregnancy when using a cervical cap depends on:



- If a woman uses the cap correctly, and each time she has sex
- Whether or not a woman has had a baby. The vagina and cervix are stretched by giving birth vaginally, which means the cervical cap may not fit as well



# Cervical Cap THE FACTS



## Advantages of Emergency Contraception

- The cervical cap is safe and can be inserted by a woman herself prior to use.
- It is especially effective in preventing pregnancy in women who have never given birth vaginally and who use it correctly and consistently for each sexual act.
- The cervical cap is controlled by the female and does not require her partner's consent.
- You can put it in place before having sex and leave it in up to 48 hours.



## Drawbacks of Emergency Contraception



- It does not protect against sexually transmitted infections (STIs).
- A clinic visit and prescription are required.
- It may be hard to put in place.
- Some women experience irritation, an allergic reaction or have an abnormal Pap test.
- If left inside longer than 48 hours, there is a risk of toxic shock syndrome (TSS). TSS is a rare but serious infection.
- The cervical cap does not work as well in women who have given birth vaginally

## Sources

Office on Women's Health:

- [Girlshealth.gov: Types of Birth Control](http://girlshealth.gov)
- [Birth Control Methods: Frequently Asked Questions](#)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

- [Unintended Pregnancy Prevention: Contraception](#)

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