



OFFICE OF POPULATION AFFAIRS

Diaphragm with Spermicide

THE FACTS



Diaphragm with Spermicide THE FACTS



Quick Facts

Effectiveness in Preventing Pregnancy:

- Of 100 women who use this method each year, about 12 may get pregnant.

Use:

- Insert in vagina covering the cervix to prevent sperm from reaching and fertilizing the egg.
- Must be coated with spermicide--a special jelly that kills sperm-- and inserted inside the vagina before having sex.
- To lower the risk of allergic reactions to latex, request a prescription for a diaphragm made of silicone.
- It must remain in place for at least six hours after sex.
- More spermicide is needed in the vagina each time you have sex.
- Remove diaphragm within 24 hours to avoid the risk of [toxic shock](#) syndrome.

STI Protection:

- No

Office Visit Required:

- Yes. Diaphragms require a prescription, come in different sizes, and must be fitted by a health care professional.

What is a diaphragm?

A diaphragm is a ring with a dome-shaped floppy covering and a flexible rim. It is made of latex rubber or silicone.



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How do I use it?

The diaphragm 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 diaphragm must be filled with spermicide, a special jelly that kills sperm. The diaphragm must fit tightly over the cervix to work.



To prevent pregnancy it is important to leave the diaphragm in place at least six hours after having sex. It can be left in place up to 24 hours. You need to put more spermicide in the vagina every time you have sex while leaving the diaphragm in place.

How do I get it?



Your healthcare provider will do an exam to fit you with the right size diaphragm and give you a prescription. You can get both the diaphragm and the spermicide at a pharmacy. Spermicide is available over the counter.

You should have the diaphragm checked after childbirth or if you lose or gain more than 15 pounds.

To search for a family planning center near you, go to <http://www.hhs.gov/opa/>

How effective is it?

Of 100 women who use this method each year, about 12 may get pregnant.



Advantages of the diaphragm

- It is safe, effective and easy to use.
- It can be inserted several hours before having sex and can remain in place up to 24 hours.
- The diaphragm is controlled by the female and does not require the consent of her partner.



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Drawbacks of the diaphragm

- It does not protect against sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV.
- A visit to a health provider and a prescription are needed.
- Some women experience irritation, allergic reactions to latex or to the spermicide or increased urinary tract or yeast infections.
- Spermicides containing nonoxynol-9 (N-9) can irritate the vagina and rectum. This may increase the risk of getting the HIV/AIDS virus from an infected partner.
- If left in place longer than 24 hours, there is a risk of [toxic shock](#) syndrome (TSS). TSS is a rare but life-threatening infection.
- It may need to be fitted again following childbirth or weight gain or loss.
- Contact with oil-based products can deteriorate a diaphragm. Do not use oil-based vaginal medications or lubricants when you are using a diaphragm. Some examples include petroleum jelly (Vaseline), hand lotion or vegetable oil as well as common vaginal yeast creams and vaginal hormone creams.



Sources

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

- [Unintended Pregnancy Prevention: Contraception](#)

"Contraceptive Technology," Robert A. Hatcher, MD, MPH et. al., 20th revised edition, Contraceptive Technology Communications Inc., 2011

Food and Drug Administration

- [Birth Control: Medicines to Help You](#)

Office on Women's Health

- [Girlshealth.gov: Types of Birth Control](#)

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