



OFFICE OF POPULATION AFFAIRS

# Spermicide

## THE FACTS



# Spermicide THE FACTS



## Quick Facts

### Effectiveness in Preventing Pregnancy:

- Of 100 women each year who use only spermicides for birth control, about 28 may get pregnant. The risk of pregnancy is much greater in women who don't use spermicides correctly and consistently.

### Use:

- Spermicide comes in different forms: cream, foam, jelly, tablet or suppository, or film.
- Spermicide is inserted into the vagina up to one hour before having sex.
- After sex, leave spermicide in place for at least six hours.

### STI Protection:

- No

### Office Visit Required:

- No

## What is spermicide?

Spermicides are chemicals that prevent pregnancy by killing sperm. Spermicides are available as a cream, foam, jelly, tablet, suppository, or film.



## How do I use it?

The spermicide is put deeply inside the vagina and works to prevent pregnancy by killing sperm before they can reach an egg to fertilize it. Instructions can be different for each type of spermicide, so read the label carefully before use.



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With any type of spermicide, don't insert it more than one hour before having sex. Spermicide should remain in the vagina at least 6-8 hours after sex. Do not rinse or douche the vagina for at least six hours after sex.



## How do I get it?

You do not need a prescription or an ID to buy spermicide. Spermicide is available at pharmacies, clinics, and some grocery stores. To search for a family planning clinic, visit <http://www.hhs.gov/opa/>

## How effective is it?

Of 100 women each year who use only spermicides for birth control, about 28 may get pregnant. Different studies show different rates of effectiveness.



## Advantages of using spermicide

- Spermicide is simple to use and available without a prescription.
- You can insert it up to one hour before having sex.

## Drawbacks of using spermicide

- Does not protect against sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV.
- Some women may experience irritation, allergic reactions, or urinary tract infections.
- Spermicides might not work as well if you're also using medication for a vaginal yeast infection.
- Spermicides that contain nonoxynol-9 (N-9) can irritate the vagina and may increase the risk of getting HIV if your partner has HIV.



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## Sources

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

- [Unintended Pregnancy Prevention: Contraception](#)

Food and Drug Administration

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

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