



**YOUR
HEALTH.
YOUR
CHOICE.**

Diaphragm

Talk to your partner about birth control before you have sex. You can use latex condoms to lower your chances of getting sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and prevent an unwanted pregnancy.

What is a diaphragm?

A diaphragm is a round dome of latex rubber that covers a flexible metal spring. The diaphragm, which is used with spermicidal cream, is inserted before intercourse and must remain in place at least 8 hours afterwards. A diaphragm is measured and fitted by a clinician and should fit comfortably over a woman's cervix.

How does a diaphragm work?

The diaphragm prevents pregnancy in two ways:

- ★ The diaphragm blocks the entrance to the cervix so that sperm cannot enter the uterus.
- ★ The spermicides placed on the diaphragm kills sperm on contact.

How effective is a diaphragm?

The effectiveness rate of the diaphragm with spermicides varies depending on its use. For those who may not use the diaphragm correctly each time, the effectiveness is 82%. If used perfectly every time the effectiveness is 94%.

How do you use a diaphragm?

- ★ Read the instructions that come with the diaphragm.
- ★ Apply the spermicidal cream or jelly around the rim and in the center of the diaphragm.
- ★ Insert the diaphragm into the vagina so that it covers the cervix; compress the sides of the diaphragm together with the fingers of one hand, and using the index finger as a guide, gently insert the diaphragm as far back in the vagina as it will go.
- ★ To be most effective, the diaphragm should be inserted less than 2 hours before sexual intercourse and left in place for 6 to 8 hours afterward; additional spermicide should be placed in the vagina with each act of intercourse to assist in killing the sperm.
- ★ To remove the diaphragm, hook a finger over or under the rim; pull down and out. Once you have removed the diaphragm, wash the device with warm water and a mild soap; the diaphragm should be patted dry and dusted with baby powder to remove any moisture and placed in its carrying case.
- ★ Check the diaphragm regularly for holes or thin places by holding it up to the light. Most women require a new diaphragm every two years. You may also need a different size after the birth of a baby, after a miscarriage/abortion, pelvic surgery or after a 10 pound weight gain or loss.
- ★ A lubricant can be used with a diaphragm. Avoid oil based lubricants as they may damage the diaphragm.

It is important to use condoms or a latex barrier with sexual partners to decrease the risk of getting a sexually transmitted infection.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of a diaphragm?

Advantages

- ★ It is not expensive.
- ★ You only have to use it when you need it.
- ★ You don't feel it. Your partner doesn't feel it.
- ★ You don't have to interrupt sex to put it in.
- ★ Your partner doesn't have to be involved.
- ★ It is a reversible form of birth control and doesn't cause any changes to your body.
- ★ It may reduce the incidence of cervical cancer.
- ★ You usually only need to get a new one every couple of years.
- ★ You can easily carry it with you.

Disadvantages

- ★ Spermicide contains nonoxynol-9. With frequent use, nonoxynol-9 can irritate the vagina and anus which increases the risk of getting a sexually transmitted infection, including HIV.
- ★ It is not an ideal birth control option for: (a) women with latex allergies or sensitivity to rubber or spermicides, (b) women with physical or neurological impairment, (c) women who are not comfortable with insertion and removal of the device, and/or (d) women with anatomical irregularities of the vagina or cervix
- ★ You cannot use it if you or your partner(s) are allergic to spermicides.
- ★ It requires advance planning to place the diaphragm in the vagina before intercourse.
- ★ A skilled clinician must fit it; the diaphragm may not fit all women appropriately
- ★ You should clean it and take care of it each time you use it
- ★ You may have an increased risk of getting urinary tract infections
- ★ You may have an increased risk of getting Toxic Shock Syndrome; you should return to the clinic in the presence of high fever, diarrhea, vomiting and muscle aches.
- ★ You need to use extra cream/jelly if you have sex more than one time.
- ★ Spermicidal foams, creams and jellies may be messy.
- ★ It does not protect you from STIs.

Where can you get a diaphragm?

You need to go to a clinician to find out the right size of diaphragm for you. However, you don't need a prescription to buy one. You can buy a diaphragm and spermicidal jelly or cream at any drug store or birth control clinic.

If you need further information or would like to book an appointment, call:

Planned Parenthood Toronto Health Services for youth ages 13 to 29. 416-927-7171. Health Services offers same-day, scheduled and drop-in appointments. For more information visit www.ppt.on.ca.

Women's Programming at the Bay Centre for Birth Control for women of all ages at 416-351-3700.

Youth can also access information about sexual health by calling the Teen Sex InfoLine at 416-961-3200 or chat live using MSN messenger at spiderbytes@hotmail.com from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. Monday to Wednesday and 12 noon to 6 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. You can also email us a question anytime at askus@spiderbytes.ca or visit www.spiderbytes.ca.