



**YOUR
HEALTH.
YOUR
CHOICE.**

Today Sponge

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 the Today Sponge?

The Today Sponge is a form of birth control. You put it into your vagina before you have vaginal sex. You can use it to help prevent a pregnancy. The sponge is a soft, round piece of polyurethane foam. It has a handle that you can use to remove it. A clinician can show you how to use it. The Today Sponge does not protect you from STIs.

How does the Today Sponge work?

The sponge works in the following ways:

- ★ It holds spermicide close to the cervix.
- ★ The spermicide kills sperm.
- ★ It works like a sponge. It absorbs and traps sperm.
- ★ It blocks the entrance to the cervix so that sperm cannot enter the uterus.

How effective is the Today Sponge?

Out of 100 women who use the sponge correctly, 84-91 women will not get pregnant. You have to use it every time you have vaginal sex. You are less likely to get pregnant when you use the sponge with a condom or another kind of birth control.

How do you use the Today Sponge?

- ★ Read the instructions that come with Today Sponge.
- ★ Wet the sponge with tap water. Gently squeeze it to produce suds. Insert the Today Sponge into the vagina.
- ★ If you have sex again, leave the sponge in. You can have sex as many times as you want within 24 hours without changing the sponge.
- ★ Leave the sponge in for at least 6 hours after you last had sex. This is so the spermicide can kill the sperm.
- ★ Do not leave the sponge in place for more than 30 hours.
- ★ Do not use the sponge when you have your period.
- ★ Once the sponge is used, it needs to be thrown out.

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 the Today Sponge?

Advantages

- * You don't need to see a clinician to get it.
- * You only 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.
- * It can be used for up to 24 hours.
- * 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.
- * 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 can be expensive if you use it a lot.
- * Some women find it hard to put in or take out.
- * You cannot use it if you or your partner(s) are allergic to spermicides.
- * You can't use it during your period.
- * You need to feel comfortable with your body.
- * If you have a pap test that is not normal, you may not be able to use it.
- * 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.
- * It does not protect you from STIs.

Where can you get the Today Sponge?

You do not need a prescription to get the Today Sponge. You can get the Today Sponge at the House Community Health Centre and at most pharmacies and at sexual health clinics.

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.