

FACTS ABOUT DIAPHRAGMS

What is a Diaphragm?

The diaphragm (DIE-ah-fram) is a birth control device that prevents sperm from entering the uterus. The diaphragm is a small, reusable rubber or silicone dome shaped cup with a flexible rim that covers the cervix. Before sex, the diaphragm is inserted deep into the vagina.

How well does it work?

- The diaphragm is effective at preventing pregnancy only when used with spermicide.
- The diaphragm will prevent pregnancy 88% of the time when used the right way. In order to use it the right way; you may need to practice putting it in.

Why is a diaphragm a good choice for me?

- It is immediately effective and reversible
- Can be used as a backup method of birth control
- Can be used during breast-feeding beginning six weeks after the birth of your baby
- Can be inserted up to six hours before sex and left in place for up to 24 hours
- Does not require a partner's consent
- It has no effect on a woman's natural hormones

Will I have any problems if I use a diaphragm?

Most women can use the diaphragm with no problems. Some women may experience:

- Frequent urinary tract infections
- Vaginal irritation

How do I use a diaphragm?

1. Wash your hands with soap and water.
2. Check your diaphragm for holes and weak spots. Filling it with water is a good way to check for leaks.
3. Hold the diaphragm with the rim of the cup facing up.
4. Put about a teaspoon of spermicide (sperm killing jelly) in the rubber cup and spread some around the rim. Do not use petroleum jelly or oil-based vaginal creams (such as Monistat). These can make tiny holes in the diaphragm.
5. Place one foot on a stool or the side of the tub or the toilet.

FACTS ABOUT DIAPHRAGMS

6. Separate the outer lips of your vagina with one hand and use the other hand to pinch the rim of the diaphragm to fold it in half.
7. Put your index finger in the middle of the fold to get a good, firm grip. (And yes, you will be touching the spermicide).
8. Push the diaphragm as far up and back into your vagina as you can, and make sure to cover your cervix (the opening to your uterus/womb).

Things to know:

- Leave the diaphragm in place for at least six hours after sex.
- To remove the diaphragm, hook a finger over the top of the rim to break the suction and gently pull it down and out.
- After you remove the diaphragm, wash it with soap and warm water and let it air dry.
- Do not douche while the diaphragm is in your vagina.
- If you have sex more than once, leave your diaphragm in place and put more spermicide (sperm killing jelly) deep into your vagina.
- Do not leave the diaphragm in place for more than 24 hours.
- Get a new diaphragm after 1 to 2 years.
- Call your healthcare provider if you have trouble urinating, vaginal itching, discharge, discomfort, or have a high fever (which could be a sign of toxic shock syndrome).

Where can I get a diaphragm?

Your healthcare provider will measure your vagina to find the correct size and fit for you. After determining which size you need, your healthcare provider will give you a prescription. You can get both the diaphragm and the spermicidal jelly (sperm killing jelly) at a pharmacy.

Diaphragms come in different sizes. You might need a new size if you have the following:

- A full-term pregnancy
- Abdominal or pelvic surgery
- A miscarriage, or abortion after 14 weeks of pregnancy
- Weight gain or weight loss of 15 pounds or more

REMEMBER:

Diaphragms do not protect you from STIs (sexually transmitted infections) or HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) you can get when you have sex. To protect yourself, use a latex or vinyl condom every time you have oral, vaginal or anal sex.