

Facts about the Diaphragm



Open Diaphragm



Flexed Diaphragm

What is a diaphragm?

A diaphragm is a dome-shaped soft rubber cup with a flexible rim. When fitted and inserted correctly, this birth control method covers the cervix (the opening to the womb) and is held securely in place behind the pubic bone.

How does it work?

The diaphragm prevents pregnancy by stopping sperm from entering your cervical canal. The inside of the cup also holds a jelly or cream that kills sperm that may manage to swim around the rim of the diaphragm.

The diaphragm must be prescribed by a health care provider who will make sure that you get the right size. Your clinician also will teach you how to insert and remove the device. Before using the diaphragm for the first time, and any time you need a refresher, read the patient instructions carefully. If you have questions or concerns, speak with your clinician.

How effective is the diaphragm against pregnancy?

If women use the diaphragm every time they have sexual intercourse and follow instructions every time, it is 94% effective. This means that if 100 women use the diaphragm all the time and always use it correctly, 6 women will become pregnant in a year.

It's obvious that the diaphragm is most effective against pregnancy when it is used all the time and always used correctly. The typical woman may not use the diaphragm every time she has sexual intercourse and/or may not always use it correctly. If women use the diaphragm, but not perfectly, it is 80% effective. This means that if 100 women use the diaphragm, about 20 women will become pregnant in a year.

Does the diaphragm protect against STDs?

It is important to use condoms for STD and HIV protection.

Can any woman use the diaphragm?

No. If you have an allergy to latex or a change in the shape or muscle tone of your vagina from surgery or birth defects, you should not use the diaphragm. If you have frequent urinary tract infections using a diaphragm, your health care provider may suggest another birth control method. Your clinician can give you more information and help you decide if the diaphragm is right for you.

Do I ever need to get a new diaphragm?

Yes. The diaphragm should be replaced every so often, at least every 2 years. Also, if you have gained or lost more than 10 pounds, have had a baby, or if the diaphragm

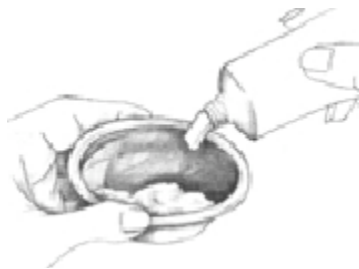
does not fit well, you probably need to get a new diaphragm. See your health care provider and discuss it with him/her. He/she will fit you for a new one.

Are there any problems or risks with the use of the diaphragm?

Using a diaphragm can get messy. Also, some women may be allergic to the material of the diaphragm or to the spermicide (jelly or cream) that you use with the diaphragm. Also, women may be more likely to get a urinary tract infection. Frequent use of spermicide may increase the risk of acquiring HIV.

If you have any problems when using the diaphragm, call your health care provider. You should definitely call your health care provider if you have any of the following problems:

- Pain or discomfort while the diaphragm is in place
- Your partner has pain during intercourse
- Soreness in your vagina
- Rash around your vagina
- Frequent bladder infections
- Discharge that is unusual or smells bad



Before using your diaphragm, be sure to read the instructions carefully. If you have any questions, talk to your health care provider.

Preparing to insert the diaphragm

1. Before inserting the diaphragm, wash your hands.

2. Put about a teaspoon of contraceptive cream or jelly into the cup of the diaphragm. (Be sure to use with contraceptive cream or jelly, not a lubricant.) The contraceptive cream or jelly contains a chemical that kills sperm; the lubricant does not.

3. Spread a small amount around the edge with your fingertip (don't apply too much cream to the rim, or it will become slippery and hard to hold).

4. Find a position that is comfortable for you to insert the diaphragm. Three possible positions are standing with one leg up and your chest leaning forward, squatting, or lying down with legs open (frog-leg).



Inserting the diaphragm

Hold the diaphragm with the dome facing down (the spermicide up) and press the opposite sides of the rim together between your thumb and third finger. You can hold the diaphragm from above or below.

Use the fingers of your free hand to gently separate the vaginal lips. Then, push the compressed diaphragm gently inward along the back wall of the vagina (towards your backbone, not straight in) as far as it can go. Keep your index finger on the outer rim of the diaphragm and use it to help you guide the diaphragm into place. Use your index finger to push the front rim of the diaphragm up until it is firmly in place just behind the pubic bone.

Use your index finger to check that the diaphragm is in place over the cervix. When the diaphragm is correctly positioned, you should not be aware that it is in place.



Removing the diaphragm

The diaphragm should be left in place at least 6 hours after last intercourse before removing.

To remove the diaphragm, put your index finger behind the front rim and pull the diaphragm down and out.

Remember

- To prevent pregnancy, the diaphragm must be used every time you have intercourse.
- The diaphragm should always be used with a spermicidal jelly or cream.
- The diaphragm may be inserted up to 6 hours before intercourse. If more than 6 hours have passed between insertion of the diaphragm and intercourse, you should insert additional contraceptive jelly or cream. You do not need to remove the diaphragm to insert additional spermicide. Simply fill and insert the applicator, making sure that the jelly or cream is inserted into the upper part of the vagina.
- The diaphragm should remain in place for at least 6 hours after intercourse and should be removed soon after that.
- After use, wash your diaphragm with mild soap and water. Store in a cool dry place. Do not use if the diaphragm looks dry, cracked, or has a tear.

Remember...regular exams for routine healthcare including screenings for sexually transmitted diseases and cancer are strongly recommended!

Questions??

If you have questions about side effects, or if you are unsure about using the diaphragm-call the clinic right away!
