

THE DIAPHRAGM

What Is a Diaphragm?

The diaphragm is a dome-shaped rubber cup with a flexible rim. It is filled with a spermicidal cream or jelly before being placed in the woman's vagina, covering the cervix. By forming a barrier that keeps sperm from reaching the uterus, the diaphragm prevents pregnancy.

Advantages

- Fairly effective in preventing pregnancy (80% to 90%)
- Helps prevent the spread of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)
- No side effects; very safe
- Provides immediate protection
- May be inserted with spermicide up to 2 hours before intercourse

Disadvantages

- Must be used EVERY time
- Must be fitted by a clinician
- Must use a spermicide
- Must be left in place 6 hours after the last act of intercourse; however, do not leave it in for too long, as this will increase your chance of toxic shock syndrome.

Instructions for Use

BEFORE USE

- Urinate and wash hands
- Squeeze 1 to 2 teaspoonsful of contraceptive cream or jelly into the dome of the diaphragm
- Rub a small amount of the cream or jelly around the inside and outside of the entire rim. More spermicide must be inserted into the vagina (do NOT remove the diaphragm) if you have intercourse more than once in a 6-hour period.

INSERTION:

- Fold the diaphragm in half, with the dome down to keep the cream or jelly in
- Aim toward the small of your back, as though inserting a tampon
- Using the index finger, push the front rim up behind the pubic bone.

CHECK:

You should be able to feel the cervix through the dome

REMOVAL/CLEANING:

- Do not douche or remove the diaphragm for 6 to 8 hours after intercourse.

- Hook the rim of the diaphragm with your index finger. Gently pull the diaphragm down and out.
- Wash after each use with plain, mild soap and water. Towel dry and store in its case, away from heat.

REFITTING

Return to your health care provider for a refitting if you

- Gain or lose more than 10–20 pounds
- Experience pain or discomfort from the diaphragm
- Have had a pregnancy
- Have had any kind of pelvic surgery

CONTACT YOUR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER IF YOU HAVE

- Fever (101°F or 38.4°C or higher)
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Muscle aches
- Rash
- Any questions