

# FACT SHEET : DIAPHRAGM

Remember, the diaphragm **does not protect you from Sexually Transmitted Infections or HIV.**

Always use condoms to protect yourself!



## HOW DOES THE DIAPHRAGM WORK?

- The diaphragm is a silicone cup that covers your cervix. The diaphragm holds spermicide (a gel or cream that kills sperm) near your cervix. Without sperm, you cannot get pregnant.
- No method of birth control is 100% effective. If you use the diaphragm with spermicide correctly each time you have sex, it is 94% effective. If you skip the spermicide or insert/remove the diaphragm the wrong way, it is 88% effective.

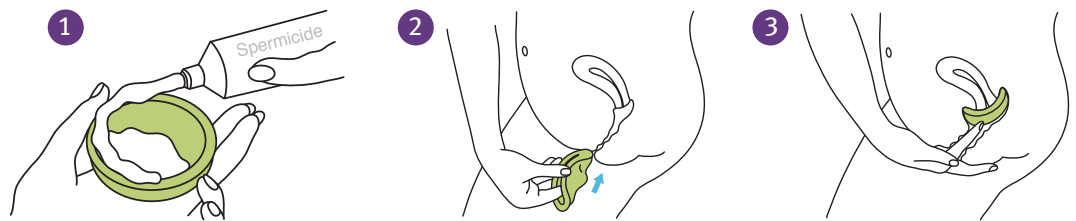
## WHEN DO I USE THE DIAPHRAGM?

- Use the diaphragm with spermicide each time you have sex.
- If you have a vaginal infection, **do not use the diaphragm. Use condoms** until the infection is gone.

## HOW DO I USE THE DIAPHRAGM?

- Your health care provider will fit you for a diaphragm to make sure you get the right size.
- Insert the diaphragm into your vagina up to 6 hours before sex.
- Remove the diaphragm 6-12 hours after sex. Do not keep the diaphragm in you for more than 24 hours at a time.

## HOW DO I INSERT THE DIAPHRAGM?



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- Put about a tablespoon of spermicide in the cup and around the rim of the diaphragm. [Diagram 1]
- Find a comfortable position (for example: lying down, standing with one leg on a chair).
- With one hand, fold the diaphragm in half with the spermicide inside the fold. With the other hand, open your vagina. [Diagram 2]
- Put the diaphragm into your vagina. With one finger, push the diaphragm as far into your vagina as you can. You should be able to feel the cervix (it feels like the tip of your nose) through the diaphragm. If you cannot feel your cervix, remove the diaphragm, put more spermicide in the cup, and insert diaphragm again. [Diagram 3]
- If you have sex again within 6 hours, leave the diaphragm in. Put more spermicide in your vagina with an applicator or with your fingers.

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**HOW DO I REMOVE THE DIAPHRAGM?**

- Hook onto the rim of the diaphragm with one finger and pull it out. Be careful to not tear a hole in the diaphragm.
- Wash the diaphragm with mild soap and water and let it air-dry. Make sure there are no holes in your diaphragm. If your diaphragm has a hole, contact your health care provider.

**HOW DO I STORE THE DIAPHRAGM?**

- Keep the diaphragm in a container that is stored in a cool, dry place away from sunlight.

**HOW LONG DOES THE DIAPHRAGM LAST?**

- Your diaphragm will last 1-2 years.

**WHAT IF I STOPPED USING THE DIAPHRAGM AND HAD UNPROTECTED SEX?**

- Take Emergency Contraception (EC) right away. EC can prevent pregnancy up to 5 days after sex, and it works better the sooner you take it.

**HOW DOES THE DIAPHRAGM HELP ME?**

- It is easy to carry.
- It does not decrease sexual pleasure.
- You can use it during breastfeeding

**HOW WILL I FEEL USING THE DIAPHRAGM?**

- Most women and their partners do not feel the diaphragm during sex.
- Some women get bladder infections after using a diaphragm.
- Some people are allergic to the diaphragm or to spermicide.

**DOES THE DIAPHRAGM HAVE RISKS?**

- Diaphragms are a safe and effective birth control method. Severe problems are very rare.
- Diaphragms must be used with spermicide. Spermicides contain a chemical (nonoxynol-9) that can raise your risk of getting HIV if you use it often.
- If you have any of the following symptoms, contact your health care provider:
  - Burning with urination
  - Vaginal itching or unusual discharge
  - High fever

