

What is it?

A diaphragm is a birth control device worn inside the vagina to cover the cervical opening to prevent the sperm from entering the uterus. It is always used with a special diaphragm spermicidal jelly or cream. The diaphragm (a dome-shaped rubber cup about 3" in diameter) holds the spermicide (substance which kills sperm) and blocks the opening to the uterus. It is generally not felt by either partner if it is properly fitted and inserted.

How effective is it in birth control?


THEORETICAL

(Perfect User)
94%


ACTUAL

(Typical User)
84%

How do you use it?

- ◆ Before insertion, always use special diaphragm spermicidal jelly or cream. Place approximately a tablespoon of spermicide into the dome-shaped cup and spread a *little* around the inside of the rim (Do not put an excessive amount along the rim as it may cause it to slip during intercourse).
- ◆ Insert the diaphragm. Check to make sure the cervix is completely covered by reaching into your vagina and feeling the cervix (feels like the end of your nose). See diagram 
- ◆ If you have not had intercourse within two hours of insertion, it is best to remove the diaphragm and reinsert it with fresh spermicide when you are ready for intercourse. If you don't want to remove the diaphragm, you can insert fresh jelly or cream with an applicator, taking care not to dislodge the diaphragm.
- ◆ You can have intercourse more than once while the diaphragm is in place. Just remember to add fresh spermicide to the vaginal side each time you have intercourse, but **DO NOT REMOVE THE DIAPHRAGM** for at *least* 6 hours. It must remain in place for at least 6 hours following the last ejaculation.

NOTE: Leaving the diaphragm in the vagina for more than 24 hours can lead to infection.

- ◆ After at least 6 hours after last intercourse, remove the diaphragm by hooking your finger under the rim and pulling the diaphragm out. See diagram 



- ◆ Wash the diaphragm with mild soap and water, towel dry and examine it for holes or defects near the rim. Do this by holding it in front of strong light or holding it under running water. Do not powder it dry, as it may deteriorate the rubber. Always store in the container provided. Never throw it into a drawer.
- ◆ Many couples object to the taste of spermicidal cream or jelly. If oral sex is frequently a part of intercourse for you, wait and insert your diaphragm and cream after oral sex, just before intercourse. Some couples make inserting the diaphragm a part of their foreplay. Also available are spermicidal jellies that are colorless and odorless.
- ◆ The diaphragm can be displaced during intercourse because the vagina expands and the cervix lifts up with sexual excitement. Use caution if the woman is on top.

What are the advantages?

- Can be inserted up to 2 hours before intercourse
- May offer some protection against cervical dysplasia
- No serious health risks
- Provides extra vaginal lubrication
- You only use it when you need it

What are the disadvantages?

- ❖ Must be correctly fitted by a clinician
- ❖ Must be purchased by prescription
- ❖ May decrease spontaneity
- ❖ Must use extra spermicide with each act of intercourse
- ❖ May increase incidence of bladder infections in susceptible females
- ❖ May (rarely) cause allergy or irritation from rubber or spermicide
- ❖ May be inconvenient to keep with you
- ❖ May be messy