

Diaphragm

What is a Diaphragm?

A diaphragm is a soft rubber dome shaped device that is worn over the cervix and used with spermicidal cream or jelly. You need a prescription and an appointment to be fitted.

How does it work?

A diaphragm provides a physical barrier to semen so that sperm cannot enter the uterus and fertilize an egg. When used properly, and with every act of intercourse, the diaphragm is effective. The rate of women with accidental pregnancy within the first year of typical use is 20% (with perfect use, 6%).

How to use the diaphragm

- Wash your hands with soap and water.
- Check for any holes or weak spots.
- Place a tablespoon of spermicidal cream or jelly into the dome of the diaphragm, dip your finger into the cream or jelly and spread around the rim of the diaphragm.
- Insert the diaphragm into the vagina by folding the rim, dome side down, spread the vagina open, and insert the diaphragm with downward motion toward the rectum. The rim should be under the pubic bone.
- Check to make sure the diaphragm is in place by running your finger all along the rim to make sure the cervix is completely covered.
- For greater protection it is recommended an applicator of cream or jelly be inserted into the vagina.
- **For each additional act of intercourse, add an applicator of cream or jelly to the vagina and do not remove the diaphragm.**
- You may have intercourse right after insertion or up to two hours after insertion.

Removal of the diaphragm

- Leave the diaphragm in for at least six hours but no longer than twenty-four hours (wearing a panty liner will absorb the vaginal discharge). But no longer than 24 hours.
- Wash your hands with soap and water.
- Locate the front rim of the diaphragm with your finger.
- Hook your finger over the rim or behind it, then pull the diaphragm down and out.

Care of the diaphragm

- After removal, wash the diaphragm with warm water and mild soap and pat dry or air dry.
- Inspect the diaphragm for weak spots or holes by holding it up to a light and stretching it gently (if you find any weak spots or holes call the clinic).

- Place the diaphragm in the container.
- If you notice any urinary symptoms consult your nurse practitioner.

Diaphragm recheck

Please make an appointment before leaving the clinic for a two week diaphragm check to be sure it is a proper fit. Wear your diaphragm into the clinic on the day of your appointment. If you have any questions please call the clinic or ask when you come in for your recheck.

Diaphragm size check

- After full term pregnancy.
- Following an abortion or miscarriage that occurs after three full months of pregnancy.
- After pelvic surgery.
- Weight gain or loss of ten pounds or more.

Possible diaphragm complications

- Allergy to rubber, silicone or latex.
- Allergy to contraceptive cream or jelly.
- This method **does not** protect you against sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). You will need to use a condom to protect yourself against STDs.
- If your diaphragm has a tear or is not properly fit, it will not be effective.
- If you have intercourse and your diaphragm was not used properly, or not used at all, you may want to take emergency contraception. This prescription is available through our clinic during supply visit hours.
- If left in place for greater than 24 hours, you are at risk for developing an infection called Toxic Shock Syndrome, or TSS.