

Danger signs for TSS:

- Sudden high fever
- Vomiting, diarrhea
- Dizziness, faintness, weakness
- Sore throat, aching muscles and joints
- Rash (like a sunburn)

Where can you get a diaphragm?

Getting a diaphragm requires an exam, a fitting and a prescription from a qualified health care provider. When you are fitted for your diaphragm, it is important that your provider also offers teaching and some time for you to practice inserting and removing your diaphragm. Call your local family planning clinic for information.

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Diaphragm

How the diaphragm works:

The diaphragm is a dome-shaped rubber (latex) cup with a stiff rim. It is used with a special gel or cream that contains a spermicide (a substance that kills sperm) to prevent pregnancy. The diaphragm and spermicide are inserted together into a woman's vagina and over her cervix to keep sperm from entering her uterus.

The diaphragm comes in different types and several sizes. A woman must be fitted for a diaphragm by a trained doctor or health provider.

How to use the diaphragm:

- Empty your bladder (pee) and wash your hands.
- Squeeze about a tablespoon of spermicidal gel into the diaphragm cup and smear it around the rim.
- Insert the diaphragm into your vagina as instructed when it was fitted. The cup must cover the cervix. Insert your finger into your vagina to check that the diaphragm is in place.
- The diaphragm can be inserted into the vagina up to six hours before sexual intercourse. It is effective immediately. If the diaphragm is in place for more than six hours, add an extra



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application of spermicidal gel without taking the diaphragm out. Leave the diaphragm in place for six hours after sex, but not longer than a total of 24 hours. Do not douche with the diaphragm in place.

- If you have sex more than once, add more spermicidal gel into the vagina each time before intercourse.
- To remove the diaphragm, slip a finger into your vagina and under the rim and gently slide it out.
- Take care of your diaphragm by washing it gently in warm water and mild soap. Rinse well, pat dry, dust with cornstarch and put back into its case.
- Check the diaphragm often for holes or weak spots, especially around the rim. Never use a diaphragm with a hole.
- Keep a supply of spermicidal gel on hand; check for an expiration date on each tube. Replace the spermicide at the expiration date.
- The diaphragm should be refitted if you gain or lose 10 pounds or more, or if you have a birth, a late trimester abortion, or pelvic surgery.
- Oil-based lubricants, such as hand lotion or petroleum jelly, as well as vaginal medications (e.g., for yeast infections) can damage your diaphragm.

Effectiveness:

About 6 in 100 women will get pregnant in one year (94% effectiveness) if they use the diaphragm every time they have sex and use it correctly (perfect use). If you don't use your diaphragm every time you have sex, you don't add more spermicidal gel with each act of intercourse, or it slips out of place (typical use), your chance of pregnancy goes up.

Benefits of the diaphragm:

The diaphragm is a non-hormonal device and can be used only when needed, with very few side effects or major health risks. It can be put in place before sex and still be effective up to six hours later (adding more spermicide after two hours). Using the diaphragm does not require the direct involvement of a male partner and does not interrupt sex.

Potential side effects or disadvantages:

Some people are allergic to latex rubber. Some people are allergic to spermicidal gel or cream; if this happens, try another brand. Planning ahead is required. You must be comfortable with inserting and removing the diaphragm.

Using the diaphragm will not give you protection against HIV (AIDS). However, some studies indicate a reduced risk to the transmission of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), such as gonorrhea and chlamydia with diaphragm use (because of the cervical barrier).

Potential risks:

Some women find that the diaphragm may cause bladder discomfort or an increased risk of bladder irritation or infections. If you have any pain or discomfort, you should see your doctor or health care provider. Wearing a diaphragm for longer than 48 hours is not recommended because of possible risk of Toxic Shock Syndrome (TSS). The diaphragm is not recommended for women who have had TSS.