

## What Is It?

The diaphragm is a small, dome-shaped device made of latex or silicone that fits inside the vagina and covers the cervix. It is used with spermicide. A health care professional needs to fit you for a diaphragm. You should wait 6 weeks after giving birth to use a diaphragm until the uterus and cervix return to normal size. You may need to be refitted after childbirth, an abortion, weight gain, or weight loss.

## How Does It Work?

The diaphragm acts as a barrier to prevent sperm from entering the cervix and uterus. The spermicide used with it inactivates sperm.

## How Do I Use It?

There are three basic steps for use of the diaphragm:

1. Apply spermicide around the rim and inside the dome of the diaphragm.
2. Squeeze the rim of the diaphragm between your fingers and insert it into your vagina. Tuck the front rim of the diaphragm up as far as it will comfortably go. The front part of the rim should be up behind the pubic bone.
3. Use your longest finger to reach inside and check that your cervix is completely covered by the diaphragm. The cervix feels somewhat like the tip of your nose. Do not use oil-based lubricants with a latex diaphragm.

The diaphragm must remain in place for 6 hours after each act of sex, but for no more than 24 hours total. If you have sex again within this time frame, apply more spermicide without removing the diaphragm. To remove the diaphragm, pull gently on the front rim. Wash it with mild soap and water.

## Benefits

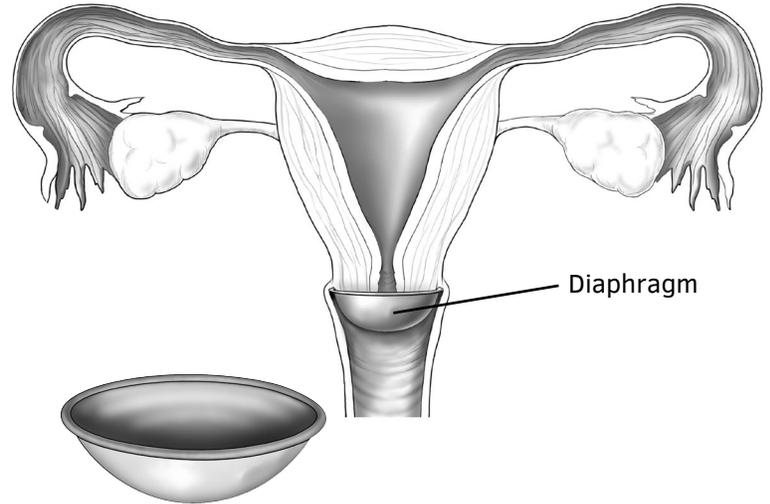
- It has no effect on a woman's natural hormones.
- It can be inserted hours before sex.

## Risks

- Frequent use of spermicides can increase the risk of getting HIV from an infected partner. Use spermicide-containing birth control methods only if you are at low risk of HIV infection.
- Toxic shock syndrome has occurred from use of the diaphragm. To reduce the risk, do not leave the diaphragm in for more than 24 hours.
- Use of a diaphragm and spermicide may increase the risk of vaginal and urinary tract infections.

## Possible Side Effect

Allergic reaction to latex or to the spermicide



Effectiveness of diaphragm compared to other methods	Highly effective
	Less effective
Protects against STIs, including HIV?	No
Effective right away?	Yes. Leave the diaphragm in place for at least 6 hours after sexual intercourse but for no more than 24 hours total.
OK with breastfeeding?	Yes, beginning 6 weeks after childbirth

\*Abbreviations: HIV, human immunodeficiency virus; STIs, sexually transmitted infections.