

# Diaphragm

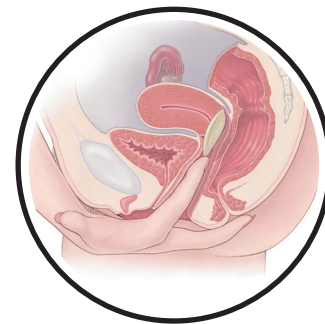
The diaphragm is a cap, made of latex or silicone and nylon, that covers the cervix and prevents sperm from entering. The diaphragm should always be used with a gel, which is placed inside the diaphragm to immobilize or kill sperm.

## How does it work?

- The diaphragm serves as a physical barrier between sperm and the cervix.
- It should always be used with a gel that immobilizes or kills sperm.
- The gel forms a physical cellulose barrier in front of the cervix and lowers the pH of the vaginal fluid, thereby inhibiting sperm motility.
- The diaphragm can be inserted into the vagina by the women using it up to 2 hours before having sex.
- The diaphragm should be left in the vagina for at least 6 hours after intercourse but should not remain in the vagina for more than 24 hours total.
- If there is repeated intercourse within the first 6 hours, more gel should be inserted with an application (the diaphragm should not be removed).

## How effective is it?

- Data is lacking on the efficacy/effectiveness of the diaphragm with the gel that is currently available in Canada. Previous studies based on diaphragm use with spermicidal gel (no longer available in Canada) have shown that the diaphragm has a higher failure rate compared to other types of contraception.



## Advantages

- + No hormones
- + Can be used by women who are breastfeeding
- + The diaphragm is one size and fits most women
- + Available at pharmacies without a prescription

## Disadvantages

- Higher failure rate compared to other types of contraception
- Increased risk of recurrent urinary tract infections
- Increased risk of toxic shock syndrome
- Some women may have trouble inserting it correctly
- Water-based gel must be reapplied after each act of intercourse
- A latex or silicone allergy will prevent some women from using the diaphragm
- Does not protect against STIs