



# UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND UNIVERSITY HEALTH CENTER

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## Diaphragm Instructions

### Diaphragm: What is it?

The diaphragm is a prescription barrier method of birth control with 82% - 94% effectiveness. It is a soft rubber or latex cup which is inserted into the vagina and fits over the cervix.

### How to Use a Diaphragm

1. ALWAYS USE DIAPHRAGM WITH CONTRACEPTIVE SPERMICIDE (jelly or cream), since the diaphragm's main function is to hold the spermicide in place so that the jelly or cream can kill the sperm. Wash hands with soap and water before inserting or removing.

2. Squeeze a complete ring of spermicide from the tube into the cup of the diaphragm just below the rim. Then squeeze an inch of spermicide into the center. Finally, rub a small amount of spermicide on the outside of the diaphragm.

3. Check after insertion to make sure that the diaphragm is covering the cervix and that the front rim of the diaphragm is tucked up behind the pubic bone.

4. If intercourse is anticipated, you may safely have intercourse one time within the 2 hours after the diaphragm and spermicide have been inserted.

5. If you have intercourse more than once use an additional applicator full of spermicide each time, no matter how short a time your diaphragm has been in place.

**DO NOT REMOVE OR DISLodge YOUR DIAPHRAGM TO ADD SPERMICIDE IF YOU HAVE ALREADY HAD INTERCOURSE.**

6. The diaphragm must be left in place **AT LEAST 8 HOURS AFTER THE LAST ACT OF INTERCOURSE.** The diaphragm may be left in up to 24 hours. It's important to note that continuous wearing of the diaphragm for

more than 24 hours may increase your risk for Toxic Shock Syndrome (TSS).

TSS danger signs:

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

8. The diaphragm will only be effective if used every time you have intercourse, even during your period.

9. Douching is not recommended.

### Diaphragm Care

a. Wash diaphragm in warm water with mild soap, rinse and dry well.

b. Dust diaphragm with cornstarch if you wish—do not use powder containing talc (e.g. talcum powder). Be sure to wash off the cornstarch before you insert diaphragm.

c. Store diaphragm in its case in a cool, dry place. Do not allow the diaphragm to come in contact with oils (e.g. Vaseline, baby oil, suntan oils, vaginal medications, etc.)

d. Check diaphragm for holes by holding it up to light and stretching it.

11. During the first week or two please **PRACTICE!** Wear the diaphragm at least 8-10 hours to see if it is comfortable. Be sure to use another contraceptive method (e.g. condom) as back up. Also practice using the diaphragm with the spermicide.

12. Return to the clinic in one week (or two) with the diaphragm in place. This checkup is extremely important in order to check for: 1) proper fit and comfort, and 2) whether you are inserting it correctly. After this check up have your diaphragm fit checked annually

with your pelvic and pap exam. Have your diaphragm checked more often if any of the following occur:

- a. pregnancy
- b. weight gain or loss of 15 pounds or more
- c. pelvic surgery

13. It is possible to develop an allergy to the spermicide. If this occurs you would notice severe itching, irritation and possibly burning of the vagina and/or vulva after use of the spermicide. If the diaphragm is in place when symptoms occur leave it in the vagina for the full 8 hours.

### DO NOT USE THE SAME BRAND OF SPERMICIDE AGAIN!

If symptoms continue, contact the Women's Health Clinic at 314-8190.

### Suggested spermicides :

- Orthogynol Jelly
- Delfen Cream
- Ortho Cream
- Gynol II (unscented)
- Koromex Jelly or Cream
- Preceptin
- Koromex (unscented)
- Ramses

They are available in 4 oz. tube or 2 oz. tube with applicator (All are equally effective. It's just a matter of preference.)

15. For women exposed to an unprotected sexual intercourse (such as a condom breaking) emergency contraception can be used within 120 hours to decrease the risk of pregnancy. Call the Women's Health Clinic at 301.314.8190.

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