

Patient Education

Women's Health Care Center



Diaphragm and Jelly Method of Birth Control

Using a diaphragm and contraceptive jelly or cream is one method of birth control. This handout explains how to use this method.

Follow these steps when using a diaphragm and jelly for birth control:

1. Empty your bladder.
2. Wash your hands.
3. Squeeze at least 1 teaspoon of contraceptive jelly or cream into the diaphragm. Spread it over both sides and the rim. Use more if you want.

Important:

- You **must** use contraceptive jelly or cream with your diaphragm to keep from getting pregnant. Use it **every** time.
- Do **not** use petroleum jelly (Vaseline) or other lubricants instead of jelly or cream. They will not keep you from getting pregnant. If you run out of jelly or cream, do not have intercourse until you get more.
- Diaphragms are made out of latex. **Do NOT use a diaphragm if you are allergic to latex.**

4. Insert the diaphragm any time **up to 2 hours before** having intercourse. The diaphragm is easiest to insert while you squat, sit on the edge of a chair, or stand with one foot on the floor and the other foot on a low stool.

Insert the diaphragm with the dome facing down. Feel around your cervix to make sure it is covered by the rubber. Also feel to make sure the front rim of the diaphragm is pushed up behind your pubic bone. You may not be able to feel the back rim.

You can walk around, take a bath, or use the toilet with the diaphragm in place. The diaphragm will not fall out or get lost in your body. But, if you have a bowel movement while the diaphragm is in, first wash your hands and then check to make sure it is still in the right position.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns.

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Weekdays from 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Tuesdays from 7:30 a.m. to 7 p.m., call 206-598-5500.

5. **Leave the diaphragm in for at least 6 hours after intercourse.**
6. If you have intercourse again, leave the diaphragm in place and insert more jelly or cream into your vagina with the applicator. **You must leave the diaphragm in place for at least 6 hours after your last intercourse.**
7. You can leave the diaphragm in for longer than 6 hours. Some women leave it in for as long as 16 hours. You must use more jelly or cream before each time you have intercourse (see #6 above). Remember to leave the diaphragm in for 6 hours after the **last** intercourse.
8. **Take good care of your diaphragm:**
 - When you remove it, wash it with mild soap and water and rinse it in clear water. Dry it thoroughly, especially around the rim.
 - Look for holes by holding it up to the light and stretching the rubber with your fingers.
 - Dust it with cornstarch – **never use talcum powder.** Talcum powder contains talc, a mineral that may increase risk of ovarian cancer.
 - Place it in a dry container and keep it in a handy place away from heat, ready to use.
9. Your diaphragm should be comfortable to you and your partner. Talk with your health care provider right away if there is any discomfort.
10. Your diaphragm is fitted to your size and shape and cannot be used by anyone else. Have your health care provider check your diaphragm when you have your yearly exam.

Important

- Remember, this method of birth control will help prevent pregnancy **only** if you use it correctly. During your fertile period, you may want to use a condom for added protection.
- **Every time** you have intercourse, you **must**:
 1. Use the diaphragm and contraceptive jelly or cream.
 2. Push the front rim way up.
 3. Be sure your cervix is covered by the rubber.
- If your period is late or you miss a period, it does not always mean that you are pregnant. But, if your period is 2 weeks or more late, come in for a pregnancy test. In the meantime, **do not stop** using the diaphragm and jelly.
- Be sure to buy more cream or jelly before the tube is empty.

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