

## Information About VAGINAL BARRIER BIRTH CONTROL METHODS (Diaphragm)

### ***What are vaginal barrier methods?***

The most common barrier method that requires a prescription is the diaphragm. Other prescriptive barrier methods include caps and shields. Barrier birth control methods available over-the-counter are the sponge and the female condom.

### ***What are good reasons to use a barrier method?***

- Does not interfere with your monthly period
- Is easy to carry in your pocket or purse
- Is used only when needed.
- Works immediately
- Does not affect breastfeeding
- Does not interfere with sex
- Does not affect your hormones

### ***How do the barrier methods work?***

When put in place before having sex, barrier methods work by keeping the sperm from joining with the egg. It blocks the opening to the uterus and the spermicide stops the sperm from moving.

### ***How do I get a diaphragm?***

You must see your doctor or nurse. The doctor or nurse will examine you to make sure you can use a diaphragm. The doctor or nurse will then fit you for a diaphragm. Diaphragms are made in many sizes. The doctor or nurse will teach you how to use your diaphragm.

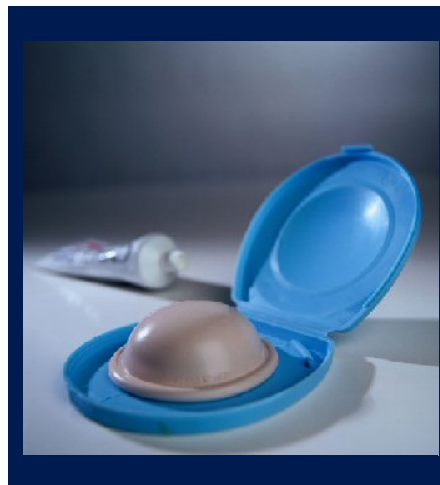
### ***Will I ever need a new size?***

Yes, you may need a new size after any of the following:

- A full-term pregnancy.
- Surgery on your abdomen or pelvis.
- A miscarriage or abortion after 14 weeks of pregnancy.
- A gain or loss of 10 pounds or more.

### ***How well do the barrier methods work?***

20 out of 100 women who use the diaphragm will become pregnant during the first year of *typical use*. 6 women will become pregnant with *perfect use*. The caps and shields have almost the same results as the diaphragm.



### ***What are some reasons I may not be able to use a barrier method?***

- An allergy to latex, silicone, rubber, or spermicide.
- Had a baby in the last 6 weeks
- Have trouble with touching yourself.

- Had toxic shock syndrome in the past.
- You have urinary tract infections often.
- Recently had surgery on your cervix or an abortion after 14 weeks of pregnancy.
- Your uterus sags.
- You do not have good vaginal muscle tone or obstructions in your vagina.

### ***What are disadvantages of using a diaphragm?***

- May be hard for you to insert.
- May be pushed out of place during sex.
- Must be in place every time you have sex.

Using a spermicide with the barrier method makes it work better.

### ***How do I use my diaphragm?***

#### **Insertion:**

- First empty your bladder and wash your hands.
- Put about a tablespoon of spermicide into the dome and spread some around the rim with your finger.
- Find a comfortable position – stand with one foot on a chair or toilet seat, sit on the edge of a chair, lie down, or squat.
- Spread the opening of your vagina with one hand.
- Pinch the rim of the diaphragm to fold it in half with the other hand. The spermicide must be on the inside of the fold.
- Push the diaphragm as far up and back in the vagina as it will go.
- Tuck the front rim up along the top of your vagina behind your pubic bone.
- Put your finger in the vagina and feel the cervix through the rubber to make sure it is covered.

## Information about **VAGINAL BARRIER BIRTH CONTROL METHODS (Diaphragm), continued**

### **Use:**

- The diaphragm can be placed in the vagina for up to 6 hours before having sex.
- If you have sex again more than 6 hours after putting the diaphragm in the vagina, leave it in place and apply more spermicide.
- It must stay in place for at least 6 hours after the last time you had sex. Remove no later than 24 hours after insertion.

### **Removal:**

- To remove, wash your hands and hook a finger behind the front rim to break the suction and pull it down and out.

### ***How do I care for my diaphragm?***

- After removal, clean by washing with mild soap and warm water.
- Allow to air dry.
- Do not use powders, oil-based lubricants, or medications when using the diaphragm.  
--Some examples are Vaseline, mineral oil, vegetable oil, cold cream, or vaginal yeast creams and hormone creams.

Check the diaphragm often for small holes or weak spots by holding it up to the light. Fill the cup of the diaphragm with water and look for leaks.

If you take care of your diaphragm it will last about 2 years.

It is a good idea to bring your diaphragm or other barrier method with you when you have your yearly physical exam.

*If you want information about other prescriptive vaginal barriers, such as the cap or shield, ask your doctor or nurse for information on these methods.*

### ***Can I breastfeed my baby if I use a vaginal barrier for birth control?***

**Yes!** Vaginal barrier methods, such as a diaphragm, do not have any hormones and are therefore safe methods to use when breastfeeding.

### ***Where can I get a diaphragm or other vaginal barrier methods?***

You can get a diaphragm or a prescription for other barrier methods at the health department, a family planning clinic or a doctor's office.

### ***If you are thinking about stopping the use of your vaginal barrier birth control method!***

Before you stop using your vaginal barrier method of birth control, such as a diaphragm, call your doctor or nurse to talk about it.

### **REMEMBER:**

*All vaginal barrier methods do not protect you against HIV or any other sexually transmitted infections. Use condoms to protect yourself each time you have sex.*

***If you have any questions, call us at:***

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