

Diaphragms

What is a diaphragm?

A diaphragm is a shallow cup made of silicone which is inserted into the vulva and placed at the top of the vagina to act as a barrier and prevent pregnancy. It is used with a special contraceptive gel (a common brand name is Caya Gel).

If used correctly, diaphragms are 82-86% effective at preventing pregnancy.

How does a diaphragm work?

A diaphragm stops sperm getting into the uterus during sexual intercourse by covering the cervix.

Sperm can live for several hours in the vagina so the diaphragm must be left in place for at least six hours after sex until the sperm in the vagina die.

The manufacturer recommends using Caya Gel, a lactic acid-based gel that is used on the inside of the diaphragm next to the cervix.

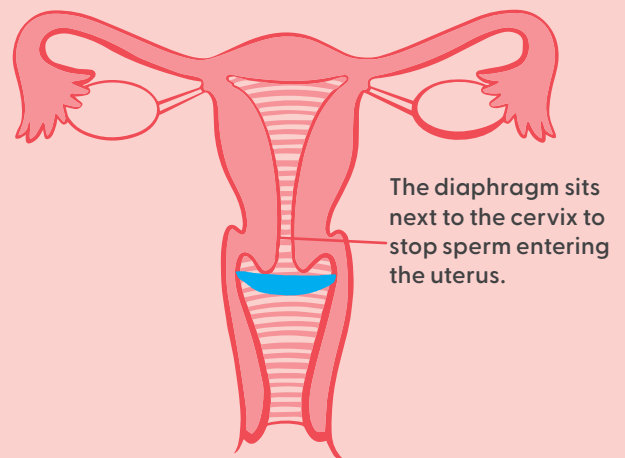
Where can I get a diaphragm?

You can order a diaphragm from Family Planning Tasmania clinics, some pharmacies or online. It is recommended that where possible you are assessed by a health professional to make sure the diaphragm fits correctly and to check that you know how to put it in correctly.

The manufacturer provides detailed instructions in the box and their website about how to use the diaphragm.

How effective is a diaphragm?

- Diaphragms are 82-86% effective if used correctly.
- Diaphragms sit next to the cervix and prevent sperm from entering the uterus.
- A spermicide/ contraceptive gel is used at the same time to make sure no sperm enters the uterus.



This is a diaphragm



Possible side effects

Possible side effects for a small number of people can include:

- irritation of the vagina or penis
- increased risk of bladder infections

The diaphragm can cause a very rare blood infection called toxic shock. It is important that you do not leave the diaphragm in the vagina for any longer than 24 hours.

How do I insert a diaphragm?

1. Apply lubricant gel to the upper surface.
2. Use the dimple grips to squeeze the rim together.
3. Insert the diaphragm into the vagina, guide it back and up towards the small of the back as far as it will go.
4. Tuck the diaphragm behind the pelvic bone at the front of the vagina.
5. Check that the cervix is completely covered by feeling it with your fingers.

How do I remove a diaphragm?

1. Leave the diaphragm in place for at least six hours after sex.
2. Hook your index finger into the dome to pull the diaphragm out.
3. Wash the diaphragm with warm water and once dry, put it away in its case.

Looking after your diaphragm

After use:

- Wash the diaphragm with warm water & plain unperfumed soap.
- **Don't** wash it with disinfectants, detergents, powders or perfumed soaps.
- Rinse and leave it to air dry thoroughly.
- Check it for any holes or signs of wear.
- If it feels sticky it needs replacing.
- Put it away in its case and store it in a cool place.

What if the diaphragm moves during sex?

If the diaphragm moves out of place, tears or is not used properly, you should think about using emergency contraception (also known as the morning after pill).

What else do I need to know?

You need to insert the diaphragm no more than two hours before you have sex, to make sure the spermicide gel is still effective.

Is a diaphragm right for me?

The diaphragm might not be a good option if you:

- are prone to bladder infections
- have given birth within the last six weeks
- are unable to feel if your cervix is correctly covered by the diaphragm
- have a history of toxic shock syndrome or
- have certain types of vaginal prolapse (where the pelvic organs have dropped down).

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For more information, support and advice visit www.fpt.org.au

FPT acknowledges the contribution of FPV in the development of this fact sheet

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