





## Fact Sheet - English

# THE DIAPHRAGM



### What Is A Diaphragm?

A diaphragm is a small shallow dome of thin silicone that a woman places inside her vagina to cover the entrance to the uterus (womb).



### How Does The Diaphragm Work?

When the male partner ejaculates inside the vagina during intercourse, the diaphragm prevents the sperm getting into the uterus. After intercourse the diaphragm must be left in place for a further six hours during which time any sperm in the vagina die.

### How Well Does It Work?

The diaphragm is 88-94% effective. This means that between 6 and 12 out of every 100 women who use this method for a year may become pregnant. The effectiveness increases with experience, consistent use and correct fitting of the diaphragm.

### How Do You Use A Diaphragm?

Diaphragms come in different sizes. It is important to be fitted for one that suits you, at a Family Planning clinic or by other trained health professionals. Complete instructions on how to insert and remove the diaphragm will be provided at the time of fitting.

You can insert a diaphragm any time before you have sex but it must be left in place for at least six hours after intercourse. It should not be left in the vagina for more than 30 hours as this may lead to vaginal irritation and

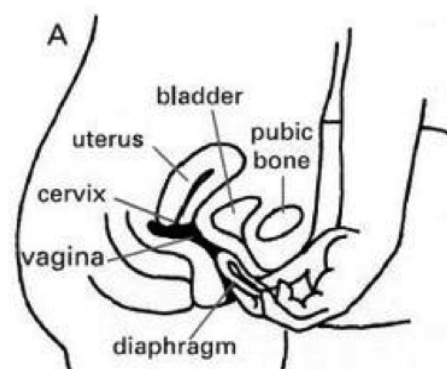
discharge. If the diaphragm is used during menstruation, it should not be left in place for longer than six hours because of the small risk of toxic shock syndrome.

After use, the diaphragm should be cleaned, rinsed, dried thoroughly and stored in a cool place.

### Inserting And Removing The Diaphragm

Figure A. Stand with one foot on a chair, or squat, or lie down.

Squeeze the sides of the rim so that the diaphragm is narrow enough to slide into your vagina. Hold the diaphragm in one hand and spread apart the vaginal lips at the entrance to your vagina with the other hand. Slide the diaphragm in as far as it will go, slanting it towards the small of your back. Tuck the front rim up behind the pubic bone.



Reach into your vagina with your index finger and check that you can feel your cervix through the diaphragm. It will feel a bit like the end of your nose.

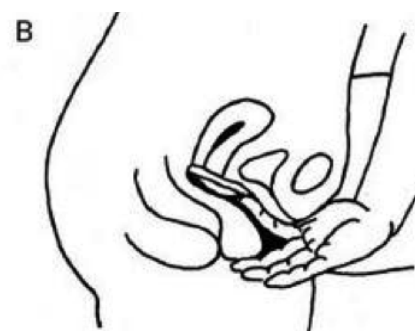


Figure B. To remove the diaphragm put your finger behind the front rim and pull it down and out.

### What If You Forget To Use It?

If you forget to use your diaphragm when you have sex, or you find that the diaphragm was not properly in place, or there is a hole in it, there is a chance you could

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get pregnant. Emergency contraceptive pills (ECP) are available at pharmacies. They can be taken up to 120 hours after unprotected sex but they work better the sooner they are taken.

### Possible Side Effects Or Complications Of Using A Diaphragm

Side effects are rare but may include an increase in urinary tract infections, particularly in women with a history of urinary tract infections in the past.

### Where Can You Get A Diaphragm?

You can buy a diaphragm from a pharmacy, but diaphragms come in different sizes, so you need to go to a Family Planning clinic or your doctor to be fitted for your correct size. When you are fitted for a diaphragm make sure you are shown how to insert it, check it is in the correct position, and remove it. You should practise doing this in the clinic so that the nurse or doctor can help if you have any problems.

You should be re-fitted for a diaphragm after any pregnancy (even if it only lasts for a few weeks), and if your weight changes by 3kg or more.

### For Further Information

- Contact the Family Planning NSW Talkline on 1300 658 886 or go to [www.fpnsw.org.au/talkline](http://www.fpnsw.org.au/talkline)
- NRS (for deaf) 133 677
- Or visit your nearest Family Planning clinic

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