



THE DIAPHRAGM

The diaphragm is a device that can be inserted into the vagina by the woman herself. It is a reversible contraceptive method. Diaphragms are at present not available in India. Many women's organizations have been advocating for wide availability of diaphragms.

The Diaphragm

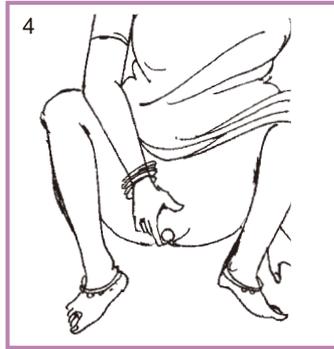
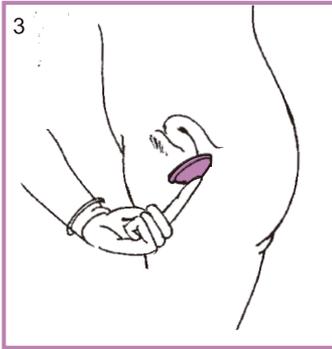
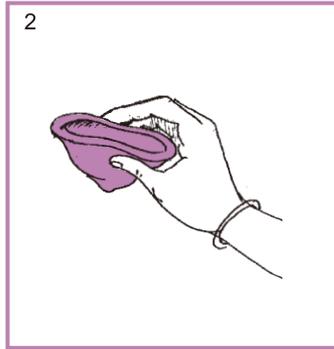
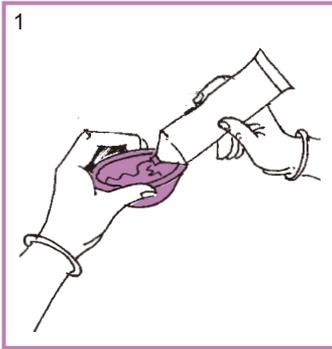
Diaphragm is a device made of latex rubber and shaped like a cup. When inserted into the vagina, its edges are designed to hold firmly against the cervix. They cover the cervix and therefore prevent the entry of sperms into the uterus. Usually, the diaphragm is used along with a medication called spermicide that kills sperms. Thus, any sperms that may enter the diaphragm die, and pregnancy cannot occur.

Spermicides

A spermicide is a medication that either kills sperms or inhibits the movement of sperms, thus preventing their passage into the uterus. These are available in the form of capsules, jelly, and creams. Spermicides can be used alone and can be applied in the vagina before sexual intercourse. However, when used along with the diaphragm, their effectiveness is higher, and chances of pregnancy are lower.

How to use the diaphragm

- Diaphragms are available in different sizes and the appropriate size for each woman varies. The appropriate size is determined after a vaginal examination by a health care provider and fitting of the diaphragm. Once the fitting is done and a diaphragm of appropriate size is given to the woman, she can then continue to use the diaphragm without medical help.
- The diaphragm should be used during every single sexual act.
- It should be worn before the sexual intercourse. If sexual intercourse happens more than two hours since insertion of the diaphragm, it is advisable to reapply the spermicide.
- First, apply the spermicide in the cup and rim of the diaphragm. Then, fold the diaphragm into half by pressing the rims together as shown in the picture and insert the diaphragm into the vagina. Slowly push it inside, ensuring that the edges of the diaphragm cover the cervix.
- Following sexual intercourse, do not remove the diaphragm for at least six hours.



- After removing the diaphragm, wash it with warm water, dry it in the shade, and place it back safely in a box. The diaphragm should not be washed with soap.
- The safely stored diaphragm can be reused many times.
- The diaphragm can be used during menstrual periods.

Who cannot use diaphragm

- Women who have an allergic reaction to spermicide or latex rubber
- Women with uterine prolapse.
- Women with a lax vagina due to childbirth
- Women who are unable to insert the diaphragm correctly

Adverse effects

- There are no adverse effects of using this method. If the diaphragm is not of the correct size, then the woman may experience pain and difficulty in passing urine. This can be addressed by going back to health care provider and choosing the correct size.
- Rarely, the woman may develop an allergic reaction to latex rubber or spermicide. This can result in burning sensation, pain, swelling in the vagina. The diaphragm may not be a suitable method for these women.
- Many women may not have adequate privacy to insert and remove the diaphragm or to wash and dry it safely. In such cases, the woman is the best judge of the suitability of this method for her.

Benefits

The use of diaphragms with spermicides is known to protect against cervical cancer and against transmission of certain sexually transmitted infections. However, it is important to note that diaphragms do not protect against transmission of HIV. A male or female condom should be used for this.



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