

# Diaphragm: a closer look

[Health & Medicine](#), [Pregnancy](#)



## Medieval Contraception

In the early medieval times, women who don't want to bear children used lemon halves to stop sperm from going to the insides of the uterus. The highly acidic lemon juice serves as a spermicide, destroying the sperm upon contact. This sparked the idea of creating the modern day diaphragm, a contraceptive used by women.

## The Diaphragm

The modern diaphragm is invented by a physician from Germany, Dr. Wilhelm Mensnga in 1880. It is a rubber contraceptive shaped like a dome, which is fit inside the vagina. It employs a barrier method of contraception, wherein it blocks the entry of the sperm into the uterus. It is filled with spermicide before it is put in place inside the vagina. It is made of soft and flexible material for easier insertion. In order to ensure comfort and ease, the woman should be fitted for a diaphragm by a specialist ("Diaphragm (Contraceptive)").

The diaphragm fits inside the vagina and blocks the opening to the uterus. It prevents the sperm from accessing entrance to the uterus. If ever there are some sperm that swims over the edge of the diaphragm, the spermicidal cream or jelly kills that sperm right away. This device is not an efficient birth control method if you do not use spermicidal cream or jelly. Every time a woman plans to have intercourse, she needs to use a diaphragm in order to avoid getting pregnant.

The diaphragm should be put in place inside the vagina moments before sexual intercourse and should stay there for 6 to 8 hours with respect to the

time of the man's last ejaculation. This is to ensure that the spermicide would do its work. It is then gently removed, washed in soapy, warm water and returned to its case so it can be ready for another use. The life of a diaphragm device is from six months to two years, depending on the usage ("Diaphragm Contraceptive Device").

### Diaphragm vs. Other Contraceptives

Diaphragms are usually mistaken with Cervical Caps. The cervical cap was invented in 1860 but is not approved by Food and Drug Administration in the US, while Diaphragms surfaced in 1880. Cervical caps are usually smaller, shaped like a thimble and is directly positioned over the cervix. Women with deep vaginas would find it rather hard to put cervical caps properly, because their position of their cervix is too far back and is hard to reach. When this is the case, using a diaphragm is preferable to ensure comfort to the women.

Diaphragms have negative and positive sides when you compare it with condoms. Using a diaphragm means you have to be sure of sexual intercourse because you need to put it in advance. After that, sexual intercourse could then be made anytime within the next few hours, without bothering to stop in order to apply and replace condom. It assures of a more intimate interaction because there are no abnormal sensations that you could get when you opt for condom. It provides all the natural physical sensation of having sex for men and women alike (Allen).

### Advantages and Disadvantages in using Diaphragm

The diaphragm device is relatively cheap. This is because diaphragm can be used for months without needing to replace or buy a new one. All you need to

provide is the spermicidal cream or jelly. It is an effective birth control method when used correctly. There are a few or no side effects from using a diaphragm.

It is unusual to experience a problem with using diaphragm. There are some people who are allergic to spermicidal creams and jellies. It can cause skin irritation and itching. When this happens, try to switch brands of spermicidal cream or jelly. If it still persists, then it is time to consult your doctor.

#### Failure Rate for Diaphragm

When used with a spermicide, the effectiveness of the Diaphragm could be from 84% to 95%. Failure is sometimes caused by carelessness, either by improper fitting or insertion of the device. Some also got pregnant because they didn't use spermicide jelly or cream (Silverberg).

#### The Goal of the Diaphragm

Just like other contraceptives and birth control methods, the diaphragm aims to reduce the likelihood of being pregnant or having a baby. Along with the goal of contraception, the diaphragm also promises an enjoyable sexual intercourse where safety and comfort is considered.