

THE DIAPHRAGM

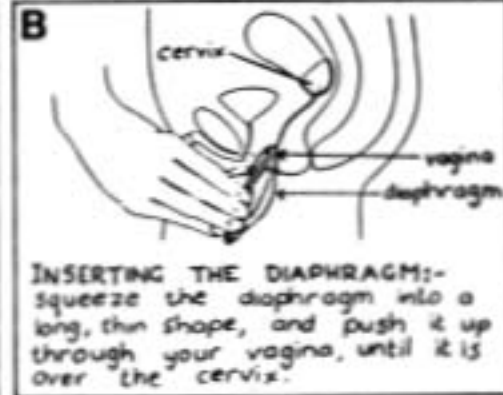
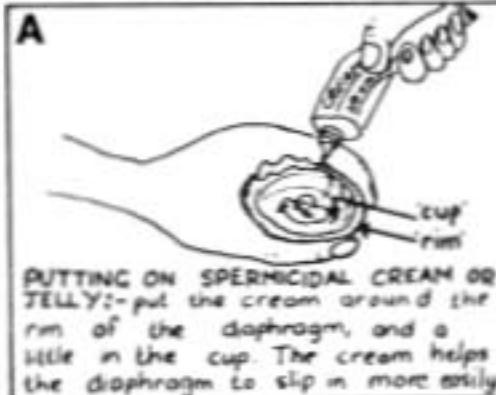


How does it work?

The diaphragm is a shallow cap made of soft rubber. A woman puts it into her vagina before having sex. It covers the entrance of the womb (cervix) and prevents the man's sperm from getting inside the womb. The diaphragm must be used with spermicidal cream or jelly which kills sperm. This is in case some sperm goes under the diaphragm and into the womb. The diaphragm should be left inside the vagina for about 6 - 8 hours after sex so that all the sperm can be killed. Different women need different size diaphragms. This means that a doctor or sister must measure the size of your cervix so that you are given the right size diaphragm.



How to use the Diaphragm



Advantages

- If the diaphragm is used properly, and with a spermicidal cream or jelly, it is good at preventing pregnancy.
- It is safe to use and it doesn't affect a woman's health.
- The diaphragm is used only when you are going to have sex, so you don't have the worry of con-

traception all the time.

- You can use your diaphragm over and over for up to a year or more if you check it regularly for holes and tears.
- Some women use their diaphragm to catch the blood during their periods.



Disadvantages

- * Women who are allergic to rubber can't use diaphragms.
- * Some people feel that it interferes with sex as a woman has to put it in beforehand.
- * A woman might want a private place to go when putting in her diaphragm. She also needs soap and water to wash it with after she has taken it out. These things may not be available for all women.
- * It doesn't work well for women whose vagina muscle's are weak and stretched - for example, after giving birth.
- * The diaphragm can be bought at chemists, but it is very expensive. It is also available from some clinics, although they might not give it to you very easily. So it is a good idea to take a few friends with you for support if you want a diaphragm.



Some important things to remember

1. Always use the diaphragm with a spermicidal cream or jelly.
2. Check with your finger to see if you have put the diaphragm in correctly. You should feel the diaphragm over your cervix - it feels like the tip of your nose.
3. Always wash and clean your diaphragm with soap and water after using it. Check to see if it has any holes or tears. If you find any, get a new diaphragm.
4. If you are constipated the diaphragm could be uncomfortable to use.



Some people's comments about condoms and diaphragms

I felt it was important for me to do something about contraception for a change, instead of my wife always. So I went to the nearest clinic. They were so embarrassed, they quickly gave me a packet of condoms without cream, nor with any explanation about how to use it.



Well me and my girlfriend actually had a terrible experience with a condom. They are supposed to be tested for strength - but this one burst! I think the only saving thing was that we were using spermicidal cream.

I much prefer condoms actually. It is just so nice not having to take all the responsibility the whole time.

Mum... and they don't mess you up like the injection did.



What I think is best about the diaphragm is that you have more control. You put it in yourself when you need it, and take it out when you don't. It's very nice for me because my boyfriend can only come about once a month because he works so far away.

I must say I like a diaphragm... and seeing as my husband won't use condoms... it means I still have contraception that doesn't harm me.

I can't use a diaphragm. At the clinic they pointed out that my uterus was leaning sideways. So while I could think the diaphragm was protecting me, it might not be covering the uterus at all.

