

Live Well to

Learn Well

Web:

health.cornell.edu

Phone (24/7):

607-255-5155

Fax:

607-255-0269

Appointments:

Monday–Saturday

*Check web for hours,
services, providers,
and appointment
information*

110 Ho Plaza,

Ithaca, NY

14853-3101

What is a diaphragm?

The diaphragm is a soft and flexible silicone barrier. It is used with spermicide, inserted into the vagina, and placed over the cervix to prevent pregnancy.

How effective is it?

When always used correctly, about 6% of those who use diaphragms will become pregnant each year. If not always used correctly, about 16% of users will become pregnant.

How do I use one?

- First, wash your hands and check the diaphragm for cracks or tears.
- Put about a quarter size amount of spermicide into the dome of the diaphragm and spread it around.
- Get into a comfortable position, as if you were going to insert a tampon.
- Fold the diaphragm in half, and insert it deep into your vagina so that it covers your cervix. You should be able to feel your cervix through the rubber diaphragm when it is correctly placed. If the diaphragm is uncomfortable, it is probably not correctly placed. Remove it and try inserting it again.
- The diaphragm may be inserted up to 6 hours before you have sex. It must be left in place for at least 6 hours after the last time you had sex. If you want to have sex again before the 6 hours have passed, add more spermicide into the vagina. Do not remove the diaphragm when you do this.
- To remove the diaphragm, reach up with your longest finger and feel the firm rim of the diaphragm. Hook the rim with your finger and pull. The diaphragm will collapse as you pull it out of the vagina. Be sure not to puncture the diaphragm with your fingernail when you do this.
- After you use the diaphragm, wash it with mild soap and warm water and allow it to air dry. Do not use any powders or oil based lubricants with your diaphragm as it may be damaged.

Is the diaphragm right for you?

Many people choose to use a diaphragm because it is:

- hormone-free contraception
- relatively discrete
- cost-effective



Diaphragms come in a variety of colors and shapes.

- easily-reversible
- convenient: after initial fitting, no need for repeated visits other than replacement every two years

Some people prefer not to use a diaphragm because it:

- does not protect against sexually transmitted infections (STI)
- requires some preplanning to be certain it is used each time you have sex
- is less effective in preventing pregnancy than some other methods

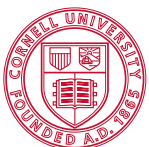
What are the side effects?

- The silicone in the diaphragm may cause some vaginal irritation. Be sure not to leave your diaphragm in for more than 24 hours.
- The spermicide can be irritating and may increase the risk of certain vaginal infections.
- Some people experience more urinary tract infections related to diaphragm use.
- While extremely rare, toxic shock syndrome can occur with diaphragm use. Do not use the diaphragm when you have your period (use condoms instead) and keep it in place for no longer than 24 hours to reduce the already small risk.

How to get a diaphragm

There are two different options to choose from.

- Caya® is a new kind of diaphragm that “fits most” users. Individuals interested in obtaining Caya® should schedule a contraceptive



appointment with a sexual health nurse who can share information, answer questions, and obtain a prescription for the device. If the sexual health nurse or patient feels it is in the best interest of the patient, a clinician appointment will be scheduled for assistance with use/fit of the Caya® diaphragm.

- Traditional diaphragms (e.g., Milex®) require proper sizing and must be ordered by a medical clinician. Either a sexual health nurse or your Primary Care Provider (PCP) can help you schedule an appointment with the appropriate medical clinician. If you need STI testing or a Pap smear, make a separate appointment for those as well. At your diaphragm fitting appointment, the medical clinician will prescribe an appropriate sized diaphragm for you and teach you how to insert and remove it. You'll have an opportunity to practice during your appointment. You should have the diaphragm re-fitted following childbirth, or if you gain or lose more than 10 pounds.

Availability

Cornell Health's pharmacy has Caya® diaphragms in stock. The pharmacy can also order a traditional diaphragm for you once you have been fitted.

For more information

- bedsider.org/methods/diaphragm
- caya.us.com
- coopersurgical.com/Medical-Devices/Detail/Milex-Omniflex-Style-Diaphragm
- plannedparenthood.org/health-topics/birth-control/diaphragm