

CAN I USE MY DIAPHRAGM DURING MY PERIOD?



You should continue to use your diaphragm during your period as it is possible to become pregnant at this time.

However, during menstruation, you should only wear your diaphragm for a total of 6 hours at a time before removing it for cleaning. It is not advisable to use it continually at this time as there is a small risk of developing toxic shock syndrome.

WILL I BE ABLE TO FEEL MY DIAPHRAGM?

You should not be aware of your diaphragm if it is correctly positioned over your cervix. Your partner may be aware of it during intercourse, but if they are aware of it, most do not find this uncomfortable.

ACCIDENTS AND USING EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION

If you have had intercourse and forgotten to put your diaphragm in or discovered after intercourse that the diaphragm was not covering the cervix properly, you may be at risk of pregnancy. Using emergency contraception can reduce the risk of pregnancy.

The Levonorgestrel emergency contraceptive pill can be taken up to 96 hours (4 days) after unprotected intercourse, but is more effective within the first 72 hours, and best within 24 hours. The Ulipristal emergency contraceptive pill can be taken up to 120 hours (5 days) after intercourse.

Both are available over the counter at pharmacies. Importantly, the sooner you take emergency contraception the more effective it is.

The copper IUD can also be used as an emergency contraceptive up to five days after unprotected intercourse and is highly effective.

WHEN SHOULD I REPLACE MY DIAPHRAGM?

Your diaphragm should last up to two years. While silicone is a durable material it is advisable to check your diaphragm regularly for holes or deterioration. You can do this by holding your diaphragm up to a light. If it does develop a hole or tear do not use it and get a new one as soon as possible.

References: Contraception: An Australian clinical practice handbook 4th Edition Faculty of Sexual & Reproductive Healthcare of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists UK. hfsrh.org/home



OPENING HOURS

Please contact our reception staff on 02 6247 3077 or visit shfpact.org.au for SHFPACT clinic hours

LOCATION

SHFPACT is conveniently located in the city.

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SHFPACT CLINICAL SERVICES

- Contraceptive advice, information and services
- IUDs and other long acting contraceptive options
- Cervical screening
- Canberra Menopause Centre
- Unplanned Pregnancy Counselling Service
- Sexually transmissible infections (STIs): testing, treatment and advice
- Blood borne virus and HIV testing
- Emergency contraception (the 'Morning After' Pill)
- Breast checks and breast awareness education
- Fertility issues and pre-conception advice
- Sexual difficulties and sexuality education
- PrEP information, advice, and prescriptions

SHFPACT is a health promotion charity (HPC) assisted with funding from the ACT Government.

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WHAT IS THE DIAPHRAGM?

The diaphragm is a barrier method of contraception. It is a dome of soft silicone with a flexible rim that is placed inside the vagina to cover the cervix (the lower part of the uterus or womb).

The diaphragm forms a barrier which prevents sperm from getting into the uterus. It is inserted before intercourse and left in place for a minimum of 6 hours after intercourse.

It takes 6 hours for all sperm to die in the acid environment of the vagina. The Caya® diaphragm, which is a single size diaphragm, is the only one available in Australia.

HOW DO I USE THE DIAPHRAGM?

You insert the diaphragm into your vagina and then check to make sure that it is covering the cervix. This check is very important and is the only way that you can be sure the diaphragm will work effectively. Occasionally it can be difficult to do this and if this is the case your partner may be willing to assist you to check.

If you are using lubricant with the diaphragm, use it after you have inserted the diaphragm and make sure that it is a water based or silicone lubricant, not oil based as this can damage the diaphragm.

You can insert the diaphragm many hours before or just before sex, whatever works best for you. You can remove it any time after the minimum 6 hours although it should not be left in for more than 24 hours.

HOW EFFECTIVE ARE DIAPHRAGMS?

Caya® diaphragms are between 82% to 86% effective. This means that if 100 people use the diaphragm for a year between 14 and 18 will have a pregnancy.

WHAT ARE THE 3 MOST IMPORTANT FACTORS IN EFFECTIVENESS?

The most important factors in using a diaphragm to make it as effective as possible are:

1. Using it every time you have sexual intercourse.
2. Making sure it is covering your cervix.
3. Leaving it in place for a minimum of 6 hours after intercourse.

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES OF DIAPHRAGMS?

- They are suitable for those who cannot or choose not to use a hormonal contraceptive or an IUD
- They are suitable when breastfeeding
- They can be used as needed at the time of sex
- They last for up to 2 years before they need replacing
- They can be used together with fertility awareness methods

WHAT ARE THE DISADVANTAGES OF A DIAPHRAGM?

- They have a significantly higher failure rate than most other methods of contraception
- Some may have difficulty using them or may not like putting them into the vagina
- They may not be suitable for some people for anatomical or medical reasons

DOES THE DIAPHRAGM HAVE ANY SIDE EFFECTS?

The diaphragm has very few side effects but can occasionally cause irritation of the vagina or penis and may increase the risk of bladder infections in some people.

WHO CAN'T USE A DIAPHRAGM?

Most people can use a diaphragm safely, however there are some things which may mean a diaphragm may not be suitable for you.

These include:

- If you have a sensitivity to silicone
- If you have frequent bladder infections
- If you have a history of toxic shock syndrome
- If it is less than 6 weeks since you have given birth
- If you have had recent surgery to your cervix
- If you have weak pelvic floor muscles or your individual shape does not suit a diaphragm

Remember a diaphragm does not protect you from sexually transmissible infections or HIV. Condoms can be used at the same time to provide this protection, and to further reduce the risk of pregnancy.



HOW DO I GET A DIAPHRAGM?

If you have never had a diaphragm before it is strongly advised that you have a trial fitting with a trained health professional to ensure that the Caya® diaphragm is suitable for you. The nurses at Sexual Health & Family Planning ACT are specially trained to do this. Once you have checked that a diaphragm is suitable for you, Caya® diaphragms are readily available to purchase online.

(The average cost is \$99.95 at the time of publication).

WHAT ABOUT USING CONTRACEPTIVE SPERMICIDE WITH A DIAPHRAGM?

To increase effectiveness the manufacturer of Caya® diaphragms recommends the use of Caya® Gel with your diaphragm. Caya® Gel is a lubricant that contains lactic acid, it is not a contraceptive spermicide.

Contraceptive spermicide is a gel which is toxic to sperm and is recommended for use with diaphragms in the UK. Contraceptive spermicides are not available in Australia.



CAN I WEAR MY DIAPHRAGM 'AROUND-THE-CLOCK'?

If you wish, you can wear your diaphragm almost continuously, removing it for cleaning every 24 hours.

Be careful not to remove it before the minimum 6 hours have passed after intercourse. Also, you will need to check before each occasion of intercourse that the diaphragm is still covering your cervix.

HOW DO I LOOK AFTER MY DIAPHRAGM?

After removing the diaphragm from your vagina, wash it in warm water with mild soap, rinse it in clean water, dry it carefully and store in a dry container away from heat. Its time as there is a small risk of developing toxic shock syndrome.