



**YOUR
HEALTH.
YOUR
CHOICE.**

Spermicides

Talk to your partner about birth control before you have sex. You can use latex condoms to lower your chances of getting sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and prevent an unwanted pregnancy.

What are spermicides?

A spermicide is a form of birth control. You put it into your vagina before you have vaginal sex. You can use it to try not to get pregnant.

Spermicides have two parts:

- ★ A spermicidal chemical, usually nonoxynol-9. Nonoxynol-9 kills sperm.
- ★ Foam, cream, film or jelly suppository, which holds the spermicide in the vagina, near the cervix. The cervix is the opening to the uterus.

How do spermicides work?

Spermicides contain a chemical that kills sperm.

How effective are spermicides?

Out of 100 women who use spermicide, between 79 and 97 will not get pregnant. Your chances of getting pregnant are lower when you use the spermicide correctly. You have to use it every time you have vaginal sex. You are less likely to get pregnant when you use the spermicide with a condom or another kind of birth control. Out of 100 women who use spermicide and condoms together, 98 will not get pregnant.

How do you use spermicides?

Before using a spermicide, read the instructions that come with it and check the expiry date. More spermicide should be put into the vagina before each time you have sex. If you are using the foam, cream or jelly suppository, they may taste bad. If you have oral sex before vaginal sex, put the spermicide in after oral sex. After having sex, leave the spermicide in for at least six to eight hours. If you are walking around, insert a tampon, to keep the spermicide in place. You can shower. Do not have a tub bath, swim, or douche. Spermicides are washed away with normal vaginal secretions.

It is important to use condoms or a latex barrier with sexual partners to decrease the risk of getting a sexually transmitted infection.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of spermicides?

Advantages

- * You don't need to see a clinician to get it.
- * You only have to use it when you need it.
- * Your partner doesn't have to be involved.
- * It is a reversible form of birth control and doesn't cause any changes to your body.
- * You can use it with other methods of birth control to lower your chances of getting pregnant.
- * Some may lubricate your vagina during sexual intercourse.

Disadvantages

- * Spermicide contains nonoxynol-9. With frequent use, nonoxynol-9 can irritate the vagina and anus which increases the risk of getting a sexually transmitted infection, including HIV.
- * It is not as effective as other methods of contraception.
- * The spermicide may irritate your vagina.
- * You have to put it in each time you have sex.
- * You need to feel comfortable with putting it into your vagina.
- * You cannot use it if you or your partner(s) are allergic to spermicides.
- * Some may taste bad, and they can be messy.
- * It does not protect you from STIs.

Where can you get spermicides?

You can buy spermicides at the drug store or a birth control clinic.

If you need further information or would like to book an appointment, call:

Planned Parenthood Toronto Health Services for youth ages 13 to 29. 416-927-7171. Health Services offers same-day, scheduled and drop-in appointments. For more information visit www.ppt.on.ca.

Women's Programming at the Bay Centre for Birth Control for women of all ages at 416-351-3700.

Youth can also access information about sexual health by calling the Teen Sex InfoLine at 416-961-3200 or chat live using MSN messenger at spiderbytes@hotmail.com from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. Monday to Wednesday and 12 noon to 6 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. You can also email us a question anytime at askus@spiderbytes.ca or visit www.spiderbytes.ca.