

Contraceptive Sponge

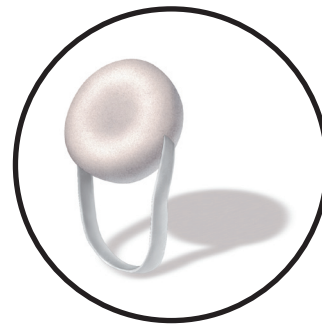
The contraceptive sponge is a small, disposable, polyurethane foam device that is placed in the vagina. It fits over the cervix to provide a physical barrier to prevent sperm from entering. The sponge also contains a spermicide, which helps to absorb and trap sperm.

How does it work?

- The contraceptive action of the sponge is primarily provided by the spermicide, which is slowly released over a period of 24 hours.
- The spermicide absorbs and traps the sperm and destroys the sperm cell membrane.
- The sponge itself also provides a physical barrier to prevent sperm from entering the cervix.
- The sponge can be inserted into the vagina by the women using it up to 24 hours before intercourse. One side has a concave dimple that fits over the cervix. The other side has a loop to facilitate removal.
- The sponge comes in one size only and is available in pharmacies without a prescription.
- Protection begins immediately when inserted and lasts for 24 hours even with repeated acts of intercourse. It should be left in the vagina for at least 6 hours after the last act of intercourse but should not remain in the vagina for more than 30 hours total.

How effective is it?

- The sponge is less effective for women who have given birth. Effectiveness can be increased by using the sponge in combination with a male condom.
- **Parous women** – women who have given birth
- **Nulliparous women** – women who have not given birth
- **Typical use failure rate - parous women:** 240 of 1000 women during first year of use.
- **Perfect use failure rate - parous women:** 200 of 1000 women during first year of use.
- **Typical use failure rate - nulliparous women:** 120 of 1000 women during first year of use.
- **Perfect use failure rate - nulliparous women:** 90 of 1000 women during first year of use.



Advantages

- + It offers a barrier method and spermicide in one
- + Provides 12-hour protection, and doesn't need to be replaced for repeated sex during this time
- + Enhances the effectiveness of other forms of contraception such as condoms
- + No hormones
- + Available at pharmacies without a prescription

Disadvantages

- Increases the risk of vaginal and cervical irritation or abrasions, which increases the risk of transmission of HIV
- Some women may have trouble inserting it correctly
- Does not protect against STIs
- Higher failure rate compared to other types of contraception