

Spermicides

Vaginal Tablets, Foam, Film



Balanced Counseling Strategy



Spermicides

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General information:

- Contain nonoxynol-9, a chemical that kills sperm.
- Are available in many forms (tablet, foam, film).
- Kill sperm when inserted deep in the vagina.
- Must be inserted before each act of sex.
- Can be used alone or with a male condom, diaphragm, or cervical cap.
- Do not protect against sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV.
- Frequent use of nonoxynol-9 may increase the risk of HIV infection.

Effectiveness for pregnancy prevention: Pregnancy rate in first year of use is:

- Correct use (used with each act of sex) — 18 pregnancies per 100 women (18%)
- Typical use (inconsistent use during sex) — 29 pregnancies per 100 women (29%)

How method works:

- You must insert the spermicides before each act of sex.
- Chemicals in the spermicides kill sperm or make them unable to move toward the egg. This prevents pregnancy.

Important facts:

- One of the least effective methods.
- You control the method.
- No hormonal side effects.
- Increase vaginal lubrication.
- Can be inserted ahead of time so as not to interrupt sex.
- Require that you touch your genitals.
- Do not protect against STIs, including HIV.
- Use condoms (male or female) if you feel at risk of STIs, including HIV.

Method not advised if you:

- Are at high risk for HIV infection.
- Are infected with HIV or have AIDS.

Side effects:

May cause irritation in or around the vagina or penis.

How to use:

- Check the expiration date. Avoid using spermicides past the expiration date.
- Begin the method at any time.
- Wash your hands with soap and water before inserting the spermicides, if possible.
- Follow the instructions below to use the different types of spermicides:

Type of Spermicide	How to use
Foam or cream	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Use less than 1 hour before sex.2) Shake can of foam hard.3) Squeeze spermicide from the can or tube into a plastic applicator.4) Insert the applicator deep into your vagina, near the cervix.5) Push the plunger.
Tablet, suppository, or jelly	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Use between 10 minutes and 1 hour before sex.2) Insert the spermicide deep into your vagina, near the cervix.3) Use an applicator or your fingers.
Film	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Use between 10 minutes and 1 hour before sex.2) Fold film in half.3) Insert into your vagina with dry fingers. If fingers are wet, the film will stick to the fingers and not the cervix.

- Do not wash the vagina (douche) after sex. Douching will wash away the spermicides. It will also increase the risk of STIs. If you want to douche, wait for at least 6 hours after sex before doing so.
- Keep a supply of spermicides on hand.

Return to the health care facility any time if:

- You have any questions or problems.
- You develop any health problems.
- You had unprotected sex in the past 5 days and want to avoid pregnancy. You can take emergency contraceptive pills (ECPs).