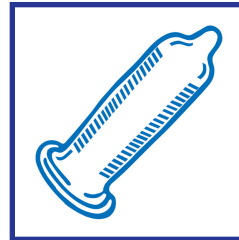


Barrier Methods

These methods prevent pregnancy by putting up a block (barrier) that keeps the man's sperm from reaching the woman's egg.

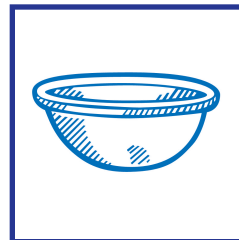
Condoms (for men): A condom is a thin latex or plastic cover that is rolled onto the erect penis before sex to keep sperm from entering the vagina. You can buy condoms at any drugstore. Health care centers may have free or low cost condoms.*



Female Condoms (for women): The female condom is a plastic pouch with a flexible ring at each end. The closed end is put into the vagina. The open end stays just outside the vagina. The female condom keeps sperm from entering the vagina. Some drugstores sell female condoms. Health care centers may have free or low cost condoms.*

*Latex and plastic condoms can also prevent HIV and other diseases spread through oral, vaginal and anal sex. 'Natural skin condoms' are not recommended for disease prevention.

Diaphragm (for women): The diaphragm is a flexible, round rubber cup that covers the woman's cervix (the opening to the uterus) that prevents semen from entering the uterus. You put spermicide in the diaphragm and then put it in the vagina before having sex. Spermicide kills sperm. You must leave the diaphragm in for at least 6 hours after sex. A doctor or nurse must examine you to be sure you get the right size diaphragm.



Spermicides (for women): Spermicides prevent pregnancy by killing sperm. Spermicides come in different forms such as foams, jellies, creams, sponges and contraceptive film. You must put spermicides into the vagina before sex. You can buy spermicides at any drugstore. Spermicides work best when used with a condom or diaphragm.

CAUTION: Spermicides prevent pregnancy but may increase your risk of HIV. Spermicides contain a chemical (Nonoxynol-9) that can irritate the skin in or around the vagina. If you want to use spermicides to prevent pregnancy, talk to your doctor or nurse about your HIV risk.

To prevent HIV and other STDs, use a condom. Latex or plastic condoms are the only kinds of birth control that are also highly effective in preventing HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). If you use other types of birth control but also want protection against HIV and other STDs, use a condom in addition to the birth control method you are using.

Birth control after having a baby
If you have just had a baby or are breastfeeding now, you may still need to use birth control to prevent pregnancy. Ask your doctor or nurse about which types of birth control you can use so that you don't get pregnant again until you want to.

Emergency contraception
Emergency contraception can prevent pregnancy after sex, but only if you use it as soon as possible – within a couple of days. If you had unprotected sex (sex without using birth control), were forced to have sex, or think your birth control method didn't work, you may be able to use emergency contraception.

