


Barrier Methods:

Diaphragm and Cervical Cap

Birth Control Guide for People With CF

DIAPHRAGM

A diaphragm is a reusable, bendable cup that you insert before sex. It is made of silicone or latex. You insert a diaphragm like a tampon. It covers your cervix to prevent sperm from getting through. You must use it with spermicide for it to work. Spermicide is a cream or gel that stops sperm from being able to move.¹

HOW WELL DOES IT WORK?	PERFECT USE	COMMON USE
Diaphragm 	94%	83%

You can insert a diaphragm for up to two hours before having sex. If it has been more than two hours, you should reapply spermicide into your vagina before having sex. Wait six hours after having sex to remove your diaphragm. You can leave a diaphragm in for up to 24 hours at a time. Wash with gentle soap and water between uses. It is safe to use a condom with a diaphragm.

You should not use a diaphragm during your period. This can increase your risk of toxic shock syndrome. This is a rare, life-threatening syndrome that occurs as a complication of some bacteria. Condoms are safe to use during your period as a backup method.

Diaphragms come in many styles and sizes. Most need to be fitted by a health care provider. They need a prescription. If you gain or lose weight or have a pregnancy, your diaphragm fitting may change. You should have your diaphragm checked to make sure it is still the right size.² One brand of diaphragm called **Caya®** comes as one size fits all. It does not need to be fitted by a health care provider. But it does still need a prescription.³

You can use the same diaphragm for up to two years. You should check your diaphragm often for holes or tears. Checking for holes or tears is easy. Hold it up to the light to look for holes or fill the cup part with water to see if any leaks through.


CERVICAL CAP

The **cervical cap (FemCap™)** is a small silicone cup shaped like a sailor's hat. You insert it in your vagina to cover the cervix before having sex. It works like a diaphragm to prevent sperm from getting through the cervix. You must use it with spermicide for it to work. It does not need to be fitted in person, so you can get a prescription through a telehealth visit.²

The cervical cap comes in three sizes:

- **Small:** For females who have never been pregnant
- **Medium:** For females who have been pregnant but did not deliver vaginally (includes c-section, miscarriage, or abortion)
- **Large:** For females who have given birth vaginally

The cervical cap is more effective at preventing pregnancy for females who have never given birth before.⁴

HOW WELL DOES IT WORK?		GIVEN BIRTH	PERFECT USE	COMMON USE
Cervical Cap		No	91%	84%
		Yes	74%	68%

You can insert a cervical cap 15 minutes or up to 40 hours before having sex. If it has been longer than two hours, you should insert more spermicide in your vagina before having sex. You need to wait at least six hours after having sex before removing the cervical cap. You can leave it in for up to 48 hours. Reapply spermicide into your vagina before each time you have sex during that time. It is safe to also use a condom with a cervical cap.

You should not use a cervical cap while you are on your period. It may increase your risk of toxic shock syndrome. Condoms are safe to use while on your period as a backup option.⁵

DIAPHRAGM vs. CERVICAL CAP

The biggest difference between the two is the shape and fit. Cervical caps are smaller than diaphragms. You can leave cervical caps in the vagina longer. But they are slightly less effective at preventing pregnancy than a diaphragm.

You need an exam by a health care provider to fit most diaphragms properly. You can get a prescription for the Caya brand diaphragm through a telehealth visit. Cervical cap sizing is based on pregnancy history, and you can get a prescription through a telehealth visit.

Some studies also suggest the cervical cap may help with stress urinary incontinence (accidentally peeing when you cough, sneeze, or jump). This is due to its unique shape.⁶

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This information meets the guidelines and standards of the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation's Education Committee.