

# Spermicide, including Sponge

Contraceptive Sponge, Today Sponge



## How does spermicide work?



- Spermicide, a chemical inserted into the vagina, prevents pregnancy because it is **harmful to sperm**. The chemical makes the sperm unable to move or “swim” properly. The sperm cannot move toward the egg to fertilize it.
- There are many forms of spermicide: gel, suppository, tablet, cream, foam, film, and sponge.
- The sponge contains spermicide and is used differently than other forms. The brand name **Today Sponge** is the only sponge currently available for purchase.
- Spermicide may be confused with *Phexxi*, but they work differently.
- Spermicide works for people of **all weights, all ages, and those using gender affirming hormone therapy**.

## How do you use spermicide?

insert  
**before sex**

You must decide to use spermicide before **each act of penis-vagina sex**.

- How to use spermicide varies depending on which form of spermicide you are using. **Always read the package to ensure you are using it correctly**. Wash your hands before inserting spermicide. Insert spermicide all the way to the cervix. Most spermicides should be inserted into your vagina at least 10 minutes before having sex, but not more than 1 hour. For most forms of spermicide, you must use new spermicide each time you have sex, no matter when you placed the last dose.
- To use the sponge, unwrap it and wet it with water. Squeeze the sponge to activate the spermicide. It should be wet and sudsy. Fold the sponge with the fabric loop on the outside and insert it with the loop facing your backside. Push it to your cervix. Once inside, the sponge will unfold and cover your cervix. To remove the sponge, pull it out by the fabric loop or grab the sponge itself. Throw the sponge in the trash.
- The sponge can be inserted up to 24 hours before sex. **The sponge should be left inside your vagina for at least 6 hours after sex to work properly**. Because the sponge should not be left in for more than 30 hours, you should not have sex more than 24 hours after inserting it. You can have sex multiple times with the sponge in, as long as your last sex is at least 6 hours before taking it out.
- Do not use the sponge during your period as it may cause toxic shock syndrome.



## Privacy and control

- You do not need a provider to start or stop using spermicide/sponge. Your provider can counsel you on how to use them correctly and can give you a prescription so they are free with insurance.
- Your partner may be able to tell that you are using spermicide/sponge during sex if they notice it in you. Spermicide does not taste good. While ingesting some spermicide is not harmful, avoid consuming a lot.
- Someone you live with or who you share insurance with may see a bill from your insurance.
- Someone else cannot see that you are using this method. Someone might find your spermicide/sponges or discarded applicators or sponges.

## When starting spermicide, will it work immediately?



Yes, spermicide and the sponge work for each act of penis-vagina sex if inserted correctly according to directions. If inserted outside of the directed time frame or not inserted correctly, it will not work.



## Spermicide may not be right for people who

- Have frequent urinary tract infections
  - Have HIV or are at a high risk of contracting HIV
- This is not a complete list, talk to your provider about your medical history before starting this method.*



## Use emergency contraception if

- You did not insert it at the **right time before sex**.
- The **full dose** may not have been used.
- You did not keep the sponge in for **6 hours after sex**.

## How well does spermicide prevent pregnancy?



### Spermicide



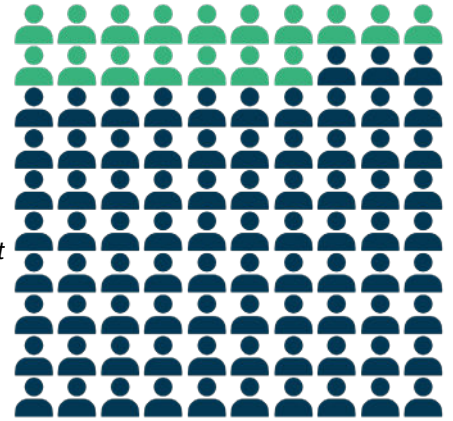
On average, **21 out of 100 people using spermicide will get pregnant each year.** This means it is **79% effective** with typical use. Typical use considers how easy it is to use spermicide every time you have sex.

With perfect use, meaning spermicide is always used correctly, 16 out of 100 people using it will get pregnant each year. It is 84% effective.



### Sponge

*A past pregnancy, even if you did not give birth, affects how well the sponge works.*



On average, **17 out of 100 people using the sponge will get pregnant each year.** This means it is **83% effective** with typical use. Typical use considers how easy it is to use the sponge every time you have sex.

With perfect use, meaning the sponge is always used correctly, 12 out of 100 people using it will get pregnant each year. It is 88% effective.

**You can use another method of contraception with spermicide or the sponge to provide more protection against pregnancy.**



## Side effects

**Sexually transmitted infections:** Does not prevent.

- If spermicide is used multiple times a day and causes irritation, it may make you more susceptible to sexually transmitted infections.
- Use external or internal condoms to lower your risk of all sexually transmitted infections.

**Period:** No effect.

**Period cramps:** No effect.

**Weight:** No effect.

**Acne:** No effect.

**Fertility return:** When you stop using spermicide or the sponge, you can get pregnant right away.

**Other possible side effects:** Vaginal or skin irritation.



## Postpartum use

- Spermicide is **safe to use right after giving birth.** It has no effect on lactation, breastfeeding/chestfeeding, or infant development.
- **The sponge is not safe to use right after giving birth. Use it at 6 weeks postpartum once the cervix has returned to normal size.**



## Contact your provider if you have

- Regular urinary tract infections
- Vaginal irritation that does not go away



## Questions to ask your provider

- Can I use too much spermicide?
- Can I douche if using spermicide?
- How is spermicide different from Phexxi?
- Can I use spermicide/sponge on my period?

Scan for a contraception guide and information sheets on each method.

