

# FACTS ABOUT SPERMICIDES (Foam, Jelly, Cream, Suppositories and Film)

## What is a spermicide?

A spermicide is a birth control medicine which kills sperm. There are many kinds of spermicides: foam, jelly, cream, suppositories and film.

## How does a spermicide work?

When you put a sperm-killing medicine in your vagina, it covers your cervix (the opening of your uterus or womb) and kills the sperm that touches it.

## How well does it work?

When you use a spermicide the right way each time you have sex, it will prevent pregnancy about 79 percent of the time. If you use a spermicide with condoms, then you can prevent pregnancy about 98 percent of the time.

## Why are spermicides a good choice for me?



There are no serious side effects and no prescription is needed. It can also be used by women who are breastfeeding.

## How do you use a spermicide?

### Foam:

1. Shake container well (20 times).
2. Fill the tube and lie down.
3. Put the tube in your vagina (birth canal) as far as it will go and then push the plunger. This puts the foam at the cervix (opening of the uterus).
4. Use a new tube of foam each time you have sex or if it has been over one hour since you put the foam in.
5. Wash your spermicide inserter with plain soap and water after each use.

### Cream/Jelly:

1. Same as foam, except you do not need to shake the tube it comes in.

### Suppositories:

1. Push the suppository deep into your vagina (birth canal).
2. Wait 10 minutes before you have sex. This gives the suppository time to melt.

### Film:

1. Put one thin sheet of film deep in your vagina (birth canal).
2. Wait 10 minutes for it to melt.

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3. Use a new piece of film each time you have sex or if it has been more than one hour since you put a sheet of film in.

**The type of spermicide I want to try first is:**

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(Circle the instructions that apply to you.)

## Tips on using spermicides:

1. **Remember:** Even if the man has not come (climaxed or ejaculated), sperm is always in his penis. You can get pregnant if the man's penis touches your vaginal opening or anywhere close by before you put the sperm-killing medicine inside you.
2. Do not douche for at least six hours after having sex. Douching makes spermicides weak so they do not work well. (Remember: Douching **does not** prevent you from getting pregnant. It may cause sperm to go into your cervix **faster**.)

## Will I have any problems if I use spermicides?

Probably not. Sometimes a spermicide will cause you or your partner to feel itching or burning. If this happens, try another brand or type (for example, try a suppository instead of foam).

## Where can I get spermicides?

You can get spermicides at health departments or you can buy them at drug and grocery stores. No prescription is needed.



## Can I breastfeed my baby while using a spermicide?

Yes!

### REMEMBER

Using a spermicide does not protect you from HIV or any other disease you can get when you have sex. Use a latex or polyurethane condom to protect yourself.

Doctor/Clinic Phone Number

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Reference: Contraceptive Technology 19<sup>th</sup> ed., 2007



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