

Sponge with Spermicide Fact Sheet

WHAT'S INSIDE:

- ❖ **What is** the sponge?
- ❖ How do I **use** it?
- ❖ How do I **get** female condoms?
- ❖ How **effective** is it?
- ❖ **Advantages** of the sponge
- ❖ **Drawbacks** of the sponge

SOURCES:

Office on Women's Health

- ❖ [Girlshealth.gov: Types of Birth Control](#)
- ❖ [Birth Control Methods: Frequently Asked Questions](#)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

- ❖ [Unintended Pregnancy Prevention: Contraception](#)

Food and Drug Administration

- ❖ [Birth Control Guide – Barrier Methods](#)

What is the sponge?

The sponge is a small, round device made of soft foam that contains spermicide (a substance that kills sperm). It's sold in the U.S. under the brand name *Today Sponge*.



How do I use it?

The sponge is placed inside the vagina and works by covering the cervix to prevent sperm from reaching an egg. The spermicide inside the sponge kills sperm.

- ❖ The sponge goes in the vagina before you have sex and can be left in place for up to 24 hours.
- ❖ Wet and squeeze the sponge before inserting it.
- ❖ The sponge has a ribbon loop on the bottom that makes it easy to remove. Place the sponge in the vagina with the "dimple" side up and the ribbon loop down. The dimple fits snugly against the cervix.
- ❖ You do not need to add more spermicide to the sponge each time you have sex.
- ❖ To prevent pregnancy, do not remove the sponge for at least six hours after having sex.
- ❖ Throw the sponge away after you remove it.



How effective is it?

Of 100 women who use this method each year, between 16 and 32 are likely to get pregnant. The exact risk of pregnancy when using the sponge depends on:

- ❖ Whether or not you've had a baby. The sponge is much less effective in preventing pregnancy in women who have had a baby. Giving birth stretches the vagina and cervix, which means the sponge may not fit as tightly against the cervix.
- ❖ If you use the sponge correctly and each time you have sex.

How do I get it?

You do not need a prescription to buy the sponge with spermicide. The sponge is available at pharmacies, clinics, and some grocery stores. To search for a family planning clinic visit <http://www.opaclearinghouse.org/search/>.





Advantages of the sponge

- ❖ The sponge is safe, simple to use, and available without a prescription.
- ❖ You can insert the sponge before having sex and leave it in place for up to 24 hours.



Drawbacks of the sponge

- ❖ The sponge does not protect you against sexually transmitted infections (STIs).
- ❖ Some women may experience irritation or allergic reactions with the sponge.
- ❖ You need to remove the sponge 24 hours after insertion in order to avoid [toxic shock syndrome](#).
- ❖ The sponge might be difficult for some women to remove.



Quick Facts

Effectiveness in Preventing Pregnancy

- ❖ Between 16 and 32 women out of 100 using this method for one year will get pregnant.
- ❖ Your risk of getting pregnant is much higher if you have had a baby, or if you do not use the sponge correctly each time you have sex.

Use

- ❖ Insert the sponge into the vagina before having sex
- ❖ Leave it in place for at least six hours after sex.
- ❖ The sponge works up to 24 hours.
- ❖ Remove the sponge and throw it away within 24 hours of inserting it.

STI Protection

- ❖ No

Clinic Visit Required

- ❖ No

