

Spermicide Fact Sheet

WHAT'S INSIDE:

- ❖ **What is** spermicide?
- ❖ How do I **use** it?
- ❖ How do I **get** it?
- ❖ How **effective** is it?
- ❖ **Advantages** of using spermicide
- ❖ **Drawbacks** of using spermicide alone

SOURCES:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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

Food and Drug Administration

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

What is spermicide?

Spermicides are chemicals that prevent pregnancy by killing sperm. Spermicides are available as a cream, foam, jelly, tablet, suppository, or film.



How do I use it?

Spermicide (in any form) is placed deeply inside the vagina and works by killing sperm before it reaches an egg. Instructions are different for each type of spermicide, so read the label carefully before use. Some types of spermicide (like tablets and films) should be in place at least 10 minutes before you have sex, otherwise they won't be effective.

With any type of spermicide, don't insert it more than one hour before having sex. Spermicide should remain in the vagina at least six hours after sex.



Advantages of using spermicide

- ❖ Spermicide is simple to use and available without a prescription.
- ❖ You can insert it up to one hour before having sex.
- ❖ A female partner must agree to use spermicide.

How do I get it?

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



Drawbacks of using spermicide alone

- ❖ Does not protect against sexually transmitted infections (STIs)



- ❖ Some women may experience irritation, allergic reactions, or urinary tract infections.
- ❖ Spermicides might not work as well if you're also using medication for a vaginal yeast infection.
- ❖ Spermicides that contain nonoxynol-9 (usually called N-9) can cause skin irritation and make you more likely to get HIV if your partner has HIV.
- ❖ A female partner has to agree to use spermicides.

How effective is it?

Pregnancy is likely to happen in 30 out of 100 women who use only spermicides for birth control during a year. The risk of getting pregnant is lower if you use spermicide correctly and consistently each time you have sex.



Quick Facts

Effectiveness in Preventing Pregnancy

- ❖ About 30 women out of 100 using this method for one year will get pregnant.
- ❖ The risk of pregnancy is much greater in women who don't use spermicide correctly and consistently.

Use

- ❖ Spermicide comes in different forms: cream, foam, jelly, tablet or suppository, or film
- ❖ Spermicide is inserted into the vagina up to one hour before having sex.
- ❖ After sex, leave spermicide in place for at least six hours.

STI Protection

- ❖ No

Clinic Visit Required

- ❖ No

