

CONTRACEPTIVE FOAM

What is it?

Contraceptive foam is a method of birth control you put into your vagina before you have sex. It contains a chemical called a spermicide. A spermicide helps to prevent pregnancy by killing sperm. The foam covers the vaginal folds and can help to form a barrier between the sperm and the egg. Non-oxynol 9 is the spermicide commonly found in contraceptive foam.

How effective is it?

The effectiveness of a spermicide depends on whether it is used correctly everytime you have sex. It is 74-94% effective in preventing pregnancy depending on how well you use it. You need to feel comfortable with putting the applicator into your vagina to use this method. For a spermicide to be effective, it must be placed correctly in the vagina and intercourse must take place within 1 hour. The foam starts working immediately.

Advantages

- easily available at a pharmacy or sexual health clinic –no prescription needed
- you only use it when you need it
- convenient to carry with you
- relatively inexpensive
- provides extra lubrication during intercourse
- its effectiveness can be improved to 98% by using a condom
- women can make the decisions to use this method without their partner

Disadvantages

- should be used with another method of birth control (for example, condoms) to be more effective
- may cause burning or irritation of the vagina or penis which may result in pain with urination or with sex.
- irritation from the foam may increase the chances of becoming infected with HIV if you are exposed to the virus
- may have a bad taste (if you are also having oral sex)
- cannot be used if you or your partner(s) are allergic to spermicide
- may be messy
- does not protect against sexually transmitted infections

Additional Information

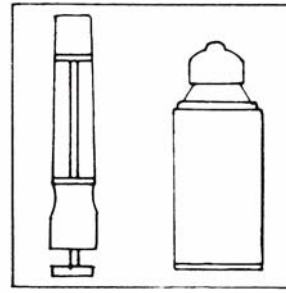
- be sure to follow the manufacturer's directions
- if any side effects develop, see your health care professional
- douching within 6 hours of using spermicide can wash away the foam, making it ineffective (douching is not a recommended practice, as it increases the risk of both pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) and ectopic pregnancy).

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HOW TO USE FOAM

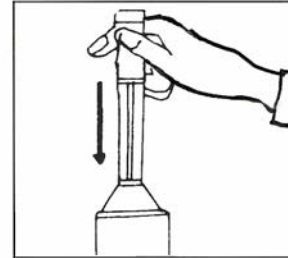
Step One

- Buy spermicidal foam with an applicator
- Check expiry date



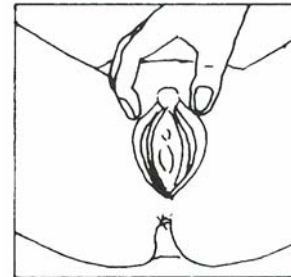
Step Two

- Shake can 20 times before each use
- Remove lid
- Set can on a level surface
- Put applicator on top of can and press down gently
- Foam will fill the applicator



Step Three

- Lie on your back with knees bent or stand with one foot on a chair
- Separate labia (lips) to find the opening of the vagina



Step Four

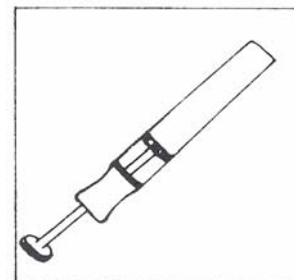
- Put a full applicator into vagina as far as it will go (the applicator needs to make contact with the cervix, which for many women is deep in the vagina)
- Push plunger all the way in
- Remove applicator and wash with soap and water



Remember...

You need another full applicator of foam if:

- *more than 60 minutes goes by before intercourse
- *you have intercourse more than once
- *you are using a condom and foam and the condom breaks



Use condoms to help prevent the spread of sexually transmitted infections,
HIV and Hepatitis B.

**For more information call Health Line Peel at 905-799-7700
and ask for Sexual Health Information
or visit our Web site at peelsexualhealth.ca**