

## THE SPONGE

### What is the Sponge?



The sponge is small, soft and round, made of a polyurethane foam. There are no hormones in the sponge and no latex.

### How does it work?

Before vaginal sex or any genital contact, the sponge is put into the vagina to cover the cervix. Before inserting the sponge, wet it to make the spermicide work. Spermicide kills sperm and the sponge traps the sperm before they enter the uterus.

### How effective is it?

The sponge is about 68-91% effective, depending on how well it is used. Using a condom adds more protection against pregnancy and against sexually transmitted infections.

### Who should not use the sponge?

The sponge should not be used in women who have a history of Toxic Shock Syndrome (TSS). Do not use the sponge when you have your period.

### How do I insert the sponge?

Read and follow the package instructions carefully.

### Things to know:

- You do not need to see a health professional. The sponge can be bought at most drug stores or pharmacies. The approximate cost is \$9 for 3 sponges in a box.
- The sponge can be inserted any time before sex but must be left in the vagina 6-8 hours after sex. The sponge should not be left in for more than 12 hours.
- The sponge is a one time use only. Never re-use it.
- It is easier to remove while sitting on the toilet. This shortens the vaginal depth. You may need to push down with your muscles to push the sponge closer to the vaginal opening. Removal takes practice but remember, the sponge cannot get lost!
- You may smell an odour when you remove the sponge. Anything placed in the vagina will develop an odour when put with normal vaginal fluids and semen. If the sponge is discoloured or if there is a bad smell in the vaginal area, call your doctor. This might mean you have a vaginal infection. Other signs would be itching, burning and increased vaginal discharge.

Use condoms to help prevent the spread of STIs, HIV and hepatitis B.

**For more information call Peel Public Health 905-799-7700  
and ask for Sexual Health Information**

or visit

[intheknowpeel.ca](http://intheknowpeel.ca)

[peelsexualhealth.ca](http://peelsexualhealth.ca)

[peelregion.ca/health](http://peelregion.ca/health)