


Barrier Methods: The Sponge

Birth Control Guide for People With CF

BIRTH CONTROL SPONGE (ALSO KNOWN AS THE SPONGE)

The sponge is a small, round, sponge-like device. You place it deep in the vagina before sex. It creates a barrier so sperm cannot get through the cervix. It does not prevent STIs.¹

HOW WELL DOES IT WORK?		GIVEN BIRTH	PERFECT USE	COMMON USE
The Sponge		No	91%	84%
		Yes	80%	68%

The sponge has spermicide. You do not need to apply extra spermicide before inserting. It is OK to use water or silicone-based lubricants with the sponge. The sponge does not have latex. It is safe to use if you have a latex allergy. Some people may be sensitive to the spermicide in the sponge. If you or your partner notice any irritation, you may need to try a different product.

You should not use a sponge while you are on your period. This can increase your risk of toxic shock syndrome.²

You do not need a prescription for the sponge. You can buy them online.

Today® Sponge

- Wet with water before inserting to “activate” the spermicide.
- Insert up to 24 hours before having sex. Do not leave in for longer than 30 hours.
- You can have sex multiple times without changing out the sponge or using more spermicide within 30 hours.
- Wait at least 6 hours after sex to remove.
- It is safe to use with a condom to protect from STIs.

SAFE-T™

- It contains a spermicide gel. You do not need to get it wet before inserting.
- Insert up to 6 hours before sex. Do not leave in for more than 12 hours.
- You can have sex multiples times without changing out the sponge or using more spermicide within 12 hours.
- It is safe to use with a condom to protect from STIs.

REFERENCES

1. World Health Organization Department of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Research (WHO/SRH) and Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health/ Center for Communication Programs (CCP), Knowledge SUCCESS. Family Planning: A Global Handbook for Providers (2022 update). Baltimore and Geneva: CCP and WHO; 2022.
2. Bartz DA. Pericoital (on demand) contraception: Diaphragm, cervical cap, spermicides, and sponge. UpToDate.com. Updated Jun 6, 2024. <https://www.uptodate.com/contents/pericoital-on-demand-contraception-diaphragm-cervical-cap-spermicides-and-sponge>

This information meets the guidelines and standards of the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation’s Education Committee.