

What You Should Know About ...

See Glossary section for definitions of underlined words.

Cervical Barriers

What are cervical barriers?

- There are now three different types of cervical barriers. They replace the former “cervical cap”.
- The three types are the FemCap, the Lea’s Shield, and the Oves Contraceptive Cap.
- They are all available without a prescription. The Oves Cap is disposable (throw it out after use).
- They are all made of silicone rubber.

How do they work?

- They are barriers. They stop the sperm from meeting the egg by covering the cervix. Use spermicide with the cervical barriers.
- The FemCap will prevent pregnancy 86%-93% of the time. The Lea’s Shield about 91% of the time. The Oves Cap about 96% of the time, when used properly. These products are new, so it is hard to find accurate information about the effectiveness.
- The FemCap and Oves Cap come in three different sizes (depending if you have been pregnant and/or given birth). The Lea’s Shield is only available in one size, which should fit all women.
- Use the cervical barriers every time you have sexual intercourse.

How do I use the cervical barriers?

- Read the instruction booklets that come with these barriers.
- You must put spermicide on the barriers before you put them in.
- Put the barriers in your vagina, covering your cervix, before you have sexual intercourse.
- Use an applicator to put more spermicidal jelly into your vagina if you are having intercourse more than once. Do not remove the barriers, because that would let the sperm in. You don’t need to put in more spermicide with the Oves Cap (even for another act of intercourse).
- If you find this too messy, use condoms for repeated intercourse while the barriers are in place.
- Leave the barriers in the vagina for 6-8 hours after the last time you had sex. This is so the spermicide has time to kill the sperm. Do not douche, or take a bath during this time. You can take a shower.
- It is safe to leave the FemCap and Lea’s Shield in for 48 hours, the Oves Cap for 72 hours.
- All three types of cervical barriers have a loop attached to help you to remove them.

How do I care for cervical barriers?

- The Oves Cap should be thrown out after it is used.
- The FemCap and Lea’s Shield should be washed with mild soap and water.
- Dry them carefully and put them back in their container.

Do cervical barriers protect me from STIs and HIV?

- No. Always use a latex or a female condom when you have sex to reduce the risk of getting an STI (sexually transmitted infection) or HIV.

Are there any side effects to cervical barriers?

- A very few women will get Toxic Shock Syndrome.
- Some women may be allergic to the spermicide. It may cause skin irritation. Tiny tears in the skin will increase the risk of getting sexually transmitted infections such as HIV.

Where do I get cervical barriers?

- You do not need a prescription for the cervical barriers.
- The easiest way to get them is to order them online at www.ladytobaby.com.
- Once you have received the cervical barrier, you can take it with you to a health care professional for help on how to insert it.

Where can I get more information?

- From your health care provider, community health clinic, or public health nurse.
- From the Facts of Life On-Line: e-mail your questions to thefactsoflife@serc.mb.ca.

If this method fails, and if you don't want to get pregnant, see a health care provider or pharmacist for emergency contraception as soon as you can.

Glossary:

Cervix – The lower part of the uterus that opens into the vagina. It is also called the “neck of the uterus”.

Emergency Contraception – A method used to avoid pregnancy after sex, because a birth control method failed or was not used.

Spermicide – A product containing chemical that kills sperms. It comes in jellies, foam, suppositories, and film (a thin plastic-like square sheet).

Toxic Shock Syndrome – An infection that is caused by bacteria. It is a rare infection associated with the use of tampons.