

VANCOUVER WOMEN'S DIAPHRAGM FITTERS COLLECTIVE

1501 W Broadway
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We are a group of lay women who fit diaphragms mostly in our spare time. We want women to be accurately fit and fully understand about using the diaphragm, a safer and effective method of birth control. When we began to plan to write an up-dated information sheet, we looked through those of other women's centres. This one from San Francisco seemed to be complete and excellent and therefore unnecessary for us to duplicate. We do, however, want to include some additional information and also to make a few changes, mostly having to do with Canadian differences.

*In a well-conducted study at the Margaret Sanger Institute in New York, diaphragms were shown to be 97-98.5% effective. This rate refers to the actual number of pregnancies occurring in a group of over 2000 women over a two year time span. All of these women were carefully fitted and instructed and became pregnant while using a diaphragm.

*Our group uses coil type and flat diaphragms; we do not use arcing spring ones. Flat diaphragms have a stiffer rim and are sometimes better for women who have a shallow pubic shelf where the diaphragm is partially held in place.

*Diaphragms can be bought over-the-counter in Canada. Prescriptions are not necessary. Several of the brand names of spermicide are different here, but the ingredients are basically the same as the American names. We use Ortho; Ranses is also available.

*We suggest that if the taste of the spermicide interferes with oral sex, the diaphragm be put in dry. When you are ready for intercourse, add the jelly using the applicator by pulling down on the top rim of the diaphragm in your vagina and inserting the jelly into the cup. Be sure to remember that pre-ejaculatory fluid can contain sperm and that without jelly in the diaphragm pregnancy can occur. Therefore, genital contact should not occur until the diaphragm with spermicide is in place.

*Diaphragms must be used during menses as ovulation can occur. Frequently women use a different diaphragm during menstruation which serves both for contraception and as a menstrual cup.

*Diaphragms should be re-checked for size after changes in exercise patterns or chiropractic adjustments, in addition to those listed on pg. 10.

*Our group will fit women who have not previously had intercourse. We insist, however, on the agreement that she will use her diaphragm 2-3 times and then return for a re-check of the size, which frequently needs to be larger.

*The spermicide is water soluble, therefore during the 8 hour waiting period, while the diaphragm must stay in place, covering the cervix, we strongly advise no bathing (swimming or baths), or douching. Showers, sponge baths and saunas are OK.

*There has been noted a link in a few women between using a diaphragm and urinary tract infections. If you can associate these two in your experience, then perhaps a different method of birth control should be used (cervical cap) or a rigorous preventive course against cystitis tried.

*There is some limited information about spermicide cream being better to use with a cervical erosion (redness around the os, not from infection).

If you want to learn more about diaphragms, come to the Women's Health Collective and read our files and look through our library. If you are interested in learning to fit diaphragms, contact the women who fit you or the Health Collective. We are interested in feedback from you!