

Cervical Cap Fact Sheet

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SOURCES:

Office on Women's Health

- ❖ [Girlshealth.gov: Types of Birth Control](http://girlshealth.gov)
- ❖ [Birth Control Methods: Frequently Asked Questions](#)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

- ❖ [Unintended Pregnancy Prevention: Contraception](#)

What is the cervical cap?

The cervical cap is a soft, thimble-shaped cup made of latex rubber. Cervical caps are sold under the name FemCap.



How does it work?

The cervical cap is placed inside the vagina and works by covering the cervix to prevent sperm from meeting with and fertilizing an egg. Before it is inserted into the vagina, the inside of the cervical cap must be covered with a special jelly that kills sperm (called spermicide). The cap must fit tight against the cervix to work.

To prevent pregnancy it is important to leave the cervical cap in place at least six hours after having sex, but it must be removed within 48 hours. With a cervical cap, it is NOT necessary to use more spermicide each time you have sex.



How effective is it?

Of 100 women who use this method each year, about 20 are likely to get pregnant. The exact risk of pregnancy when using a cervical cap depends on:

- ❖ If a woman uses the cap correctly, and each time she has sex
- ❖ Whether or not a woman has had a baby. The vagina and cervix are stretched by giving birth vaginally, which means the cervical cap may not fit as well

How do I get it?

Cervical caps come in different sizes. Your doctor or nurse will let you know the size that is right for you and will give you a prescription. Then you can buy a cervical cap and spermicidal jelly at a pharmacy.

To search for a family planning clinic near you, go to <http://www.opaclearinghouse.org/search/>.





Advantages of the cervical cap

- ❖ The cervical cap is safe and simple to use
- ❖ It is especially effective in preventing pregnancy in women who have never given birth vaginally and who use it correctly and consistently each time she has sex
- ❖ The cervical cap is controlled by the female and does not require the consent of her partner
- ❖ You can put it in place before having sex and leave it in up to 48 hours



Drawbacks of the cervical cap

- ❖ Does not protect against sexually transmitted infections (STIs)
- ❖ If left inside longer than 48 hours there is a chance irritation will occur
- ❖ Requires a clinic visit and prescription
- ❖ Does not work as well in women who have given childbirth vaginally



Quick Facts

Effectiveness in Preventing Pregnancy

- ❖ Of 100 women who use this method each year, about 20 are likely to get pregnant
- ❖ However, the risk of pregnancy is much greater in women who have given birth vaginally or who do not use the cap consistently and correctly

Use

- ❖ The inside of the cap must be coated with a special jelly that kills sperm (called spermicide) and put into in the vagina (covering the cervix) before having sex
- ❖ It must stay in place at least six hours after sex
- ❖ The cap must fit tight against the cervix

STI Protection

- ❖ No

Clinic Visit Required

- ❖ Yes. Cervical caps require a prescription, come in different sizes, and must be fitted by a health care professional

