

## Birth Control: Spermicides



Spermicides help prevent pregnancy by killing sperm before they can enter the uterus. They come in many forms, including foam, jelly, film, and suppository-like inserts. These can be bought in drugstores without a prescription.



### Pregnancy rates

Talk to your healthcare provider about the effectiveness of this birth control method.

### Using spermicides

- For best protection against pregnancy, use spermicides with a barrier method (condom, diaphragm, or cervical cap).
- Apply before there is any contact between the penis and vagina.
- Check the package for instructions on how to apply.
- Reapply each time you have sex.
- Don't douche or use tampons for 6 to 8 hours after using a spermicide.

### Pros

- Easy to get
- No prescription needed
- Either partner can apply them, so responsibility can be shared
- Come in many forms
- Easy to stop if you decide you want to become pregnant

## Cons

- High pregnancy rate when used alone
- Provides little protection against sexually transmitted infections (STIs)
- Can interrupt sex
- May cause minor irritation of the skin or vagina
- May taste bad

## Spermicides may not be for you

Spermicides may not be for you if:

- You are not also using a barrier method
- You are allergic to spermicides
- You're not willing to interrupt lovemaking to apply them

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