

What is the cervical cap?

The cervical cap is a small, bowl-shaped, silicone cup. It is inserted into the vagina and fits snugly over the cervix. There is a strap for easy removal. The cervical cap is designed to be used with spermicide.

How effective is the cervical cap?

The effectiveness of the cervical cap depends on:

- Whether you have previously given birth (had a baby)
- If you are using the cervical cap the right way every time you have sex, which means making sure the cup is covering the cervix and using spermicide with the cervical cap

Typically, 14 out of 100 women who have never given birth will become pregnant each year women who have given birth will become pregnant each year.

How does it work?

The cervical cap covers the cervix to block sperm from entering the uterus. The spermicide used with the cap kills sperm.

The cervical cap comes in three sizes. Your health care provider will determine and prescribe the right size for you. He or she will also show you how to properly use, insert, and remove it.

Important things to remember when using the cervical cap:

- To use the cervical cap, put spermicide inside the bowl and the outer groove of the cap.
- Insert it into your vagina. You should press the cap against the cervix to form a tight seal.
- You do not need to add more spermicide to have sex again.
- After the last time you have sex, leave the cap in for at least 6 hours.
- Do not keep the cervical cap in for more than 48 hours.
- The cervical cap should not be used when you have your period.

What are the benefits of using the cervical cap?

- The cervical cap is safe, simple, and convenient.
- With proper care, your cervical cap should last about two years.

- You can insert the cervical cap ahead of time so that it doesn't interrupt sexual activity.

What are the downsides of using the cervical cap?

- The cervical cap does not protect against sexually transmitted infections (STIs).
- You must use the cervical cap each time you have sex.
- The cervical cap requires a visit to a health care provider to get a prescription.
- The cervical cap is less effective at preventing pregnancy than some other birth control methods, especially for women who have given birth.
- It cannot be used when you have your period.
- The cervical cap can cause vaginal irritation and increase your risk for vaginal infections.

Where can I get the cervical cap?

A trained health care professional can determine the right size cap for you and give you a prescription. You can purchase a cervical cap at a drugstore or clinic with a prescription.

Where can I get more information?

For more information on the cervical cap, talk to your health care provider.

Compare the cervical cap to other birth control options using ARHP's Method Match at www.arhp.org/MethodMatch.