

# THE CERVICAL CAP



## What is a Cervical Cap?

- A cervical cap is a small device made of soft latex rubber that fits over your cervix.
- Cervical caps come in different sizes and must be fitted by a clinician.

## How does the Cervical Cap work?

- It is a barrier method of birth control (similar to the diaphragm) that is used with spermicide.
- The cervical cap is held in place by suction so that sperm cannot enter the uterus.
- The cap must be checked for correct placement after insertion and before every act of intercourse.
- The cap must be left in place for at least 6 hours after the last act of intercourse but no longer than a total of 24 hours.

## How effective is it?

The cervical cap is considered a good method of birth control. Twenty per cent of users will experience an accidental pregnancy within the first year. With consistent and correct usage 9% will have pregnancies. The cervical cap must be used every time you have intercourse.

## Advantages

- Small and easy to carry
- May be put in up to an hour before sex
- Will work for 24 hours during which you can have sex as many times as you want
- Your partner doesn't have to know you are using it

## Disadvantages

- Must be fitted by a clinician
- May interrupt sex
- May increase your risk for inflammation of the surface of the cervix
- May be difficult for some women to insert a cervical cap properly even after being taught
- Possible to dislodge during use and increase risk for pregnancy
- New fitting may be necessary after a baby, abortion, miscarriage, or gaining 10 pounds
- Latex (rubber) allergies may cause irritation
- Should be replaced each year
- Must be left in at least 6 hours after the last time you have sex



## Other Considerations

To date there has been no link between the use of the cap and toxic shock. However, to avoid this possibility, it is recommended that the cap:

- Not be left in for more than 24 hours
- Not be used during your period or if you are bleeding from your vagina for any reason. Use another method during these times.
- Not be used if you have any vaginal, cervical or pelvic infection

### **What if I have sex and don't use Birth Control?**

Did you know that ...for up to 120 hours (5 days)... after sex...you can take emergency pills to avoid becoming pregnant? (The sooner they are taken after an episode of unprotected intercourse the more effective they are)...AND for 7 days...after sex...you can have an IUD put in, so you won't become pregnant. Not all doctors know about this. IF you need to know more or would like the phone numbers of doctors or clinics near you that have emergency birth control, call the Facts of Life line 1-800-739-7367 or 731-7803 in the lower mainland.

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