

VAGINAL SPERMICIDES

Effectiveness (chances of NOT getting pregnant)

- 50-95% (among typical users in the first year of use)

What are vaginal spermicides?

- A chemical birth control method that kills sperm and prevents pregnancy.
- Comes in the form of gel, foam, cream, film, suppository, or tablet.

What are the advantages of vaginal spermicides?

- A relatively safe contraceptive method when combined with the use of a barrier method (condom, diaphragm, cervical cap).
- May lower the chance of becoming infected with a bacterial sexually transmitted disease.
- Can be purchased without prescription.
- Depending on the amount purchased is relatively inexpensive.
- Immediate protection is available.
- Good method for persons who have sexual intercourse infrequently or not very often.
- Simple back up method for women waiting to start the pill or have an IUD inserted, or for forgetting to take pill or running out of pills.
- Provides lubrication during intercourse especially with condom use.
- Male partner does not need to be involved in decision to use product.
- Does not interfere with breast feeding.

What are the disadvantages of vaginal spermicides?

- Allergic reactions or hypersensitivity to ingredients may occur.
- Some persons may have difficulty inserting properly.
- Abnormal vaginal anatomy (e.g. prolapsed uterus) may interfere with proper insertion.
- Poor protection from HIV exposure.

How do I decide?

- Are you sensitive or allergic to ingredients in product?
- Do you have sexual intercourse infrequently? This may a good choice for you.
- Are you comfortable touching your vagina?
- Do you want to use vaginal spermicides as a backup?
- Does this method fit with your religious or moral beliefs?
- Your decision should be what is best for you.
- Do you want to discuss this method with your clinician, family planning clinic staff, husband, partner, friend, or family member? In the Philadelphia area, click here for a list of local family planning clinics. Outside of Philadelphia, please click here for a clinic near you www.plannedparenthood.org.

REMINDER: This method does not provide any protection against sexually transmitted diseases (STD's) including HIV and Hepatitis B. Using condoms consistently can help provide protection from STD's.