

## Where can you get a cervical barrier device?

Getting a cervical barrier device requires an exam, a fitting and a prescription from a qualified health provider. Your provider should offer to teach you how to use the device and give you time to practice inserting and removing your device. Call your local family planning clinic for information. The following websites can offer more information:

[www.cervicalbarriers.org](http://www.cervicalbarriers.org)

[www.femcap.com](http://www.femcap.com)

[www.leasshield.com](http://www.leasshield.com)

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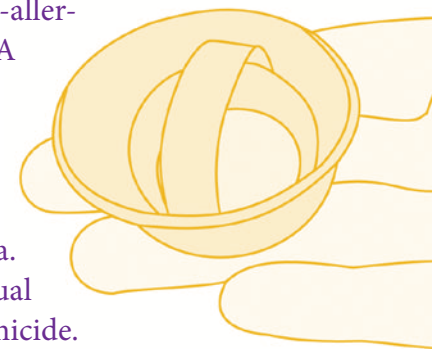
# Cervical Barriers

Cervical barrier methods include the FemCap® and Lea's Shield®. Also included in this group of contraceptive methods are the diaphragm and sponge (see separate fact sheets). The Cervical Cap is no longer available in the United States.

## How a cervical barrier works:

### FemCap®:

The FemCap® is a non-hormonal latex-free contraceptive device that is non-allergenic and comes in three sizes. A trained health care provider can advise a woman about the right size. The FemCap® is designed to fit over the cervix and against the top of the vagina. It should be inserted before sexual arousal and is used with a spermicide.



### Lea's Shield®:

Lea's Shield® is a one-size-fits all reusable cervical barrier device made of medical grade silicone rubber. It fits over the cervix and is held in place by the vaginal wall, not the cervix. It should be used with spermicide.

Both of these devices are washable and reusable and can be kept in place for up to 48 hours. They are available by prescription only.

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## How to use the cervical barriers:

- Wash your hands.
- Follow the instructions for insertion. When you are given a prescription for your device, the doctor or health provider will teach you how to use it correctly.
- Take good care of your cervical device by washing it gently in warm water and mild soap.
- If you use extra lubricants during sex, be sure that they are water-based like KY Liquid®.

## Effectiveness:

About 9 in 100 women will get pregnant if they use the cap every time they have sex and use it correctly for one year (91% perfect use effectiveness). The failure rate almost triples for women who have experienced childbirth. If you don't use the cap every time or it slips out of place (typical use), your chance of pregnancy goes up. Effectiveness rates for the FemCap® and the Lea's Shield® are similar. Visit product websites for more information.

## Benefits of the cervical barriers:

Cervical barrier methods are non-hormonal, woman-initiated and simple to use. Because they are typically durable and reusable, they can be considered low-cost contraception. These devices can be inserted anytime before sexual intercourse. Using the cap, Lea's Shield® or FemCap® does not need to interrupt sexual activity.

These devices may be more comfortable for some women than the diaphragm. They may be left in place for up to 48 hours; longer than the diaphragm and the sponge.

## Potential side effects or disadvantages:

A woman needs to feel comfortable inserting a device into her vagina. Because women are built differently inside, not all women are easily able to insert and remove cervical devices. Planning ahead is required. Due to limited cap sizes, not all women can be fitted properly with a cap. Some people are allergic to spermicides used along with these devices.

Using cervical barriers methods will not give you protection against HIV (AIDS) or sexually transmitted infections (STIs) such as gonorrhea, chlamydia, herpes, genital warts (HPV), hepatitis B and syphilis.

## Potential risks:

Wearing a cervical barrier for longer than 48 hours is not recommended because of possible risk of Toxic Shock Syndrome (TSS).

Danger signs for TSS:

- Sudden high fever
- Vomiting, diarrhea
- Dizziness, faintness, weakness
- Sore throat, aching muscles and joints
- Rash (like a sunburn)

Some women who use these methods may be more likely to have abnormal cells on their Pap smears. If you are considering a Fem-Cap® or Lea's Shield®, discuss these potential risks with your health care provider.

Also, frequent use of spermicides (more than twice a day) may cause internal vaginal irritation that could increase the risk of HIV infection.