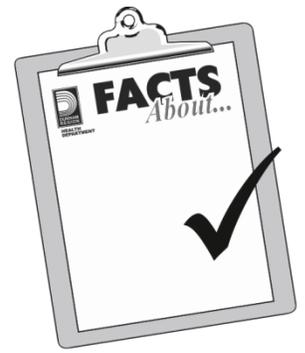




# FACTS

## About...



HEALTH DEPARTMENT

# Spermicide

## What is it?

Spermicide contains chemicals, most commonly nonoxynol-9, that kills sperm. Spermicides are inserted into the vagina prior to sexual intercourse to prevent pregnancy. Spermicidal products come in many forms. These include creams (only for use with diaphragms and cervical cap), films, gels, foams, vaginal suppositories and sponge.

## How effective is it?

Spermicides are between 80% and 82% effective for birth control, depending on consistent and correct use. Spermicides should be used with another form of birth control (i.e., condoms) as they are not highly effective and **do not** prevent the transmission of sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

## What are the benefits?

Spermicides can be easily purchased over the counter and do not require a prescription.

## What are the side effects?

There are no major side effects associated with spermicide use. Temporary skin irritation involving the vulva, vagina, or penis is the most common problem experienced.

## What are the limitations?

If there is a need for highly effective contraception, spermicides should not be your first choice. Spermicides **do not** protect against STIs, including HIV/AIDS, and may in fact increase the risk of HIV transmission. Due to this, it is recommended that spermicides only be used by women who are at low risk for STIs (i.e., women in monogamous relationships where STIs have been ruled out). Women who are uncomfortable touching their genital area may not be comfortable using this method.

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For more information

Durham Region Health Department

905-666-6241 1-800-841-2729 durham.ca

If you require this information in an accessible format, contact 1-800-841-2729.



## What are the effects on breastfeeding?

Spermicide can be used when breastfeeding.

## What you should know...

Most spermicides require re-application if intercourse is repeated. It is very important to follow the instructions for use as each product varies.

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