

C5.18 - SPERMICIDAL FOAM & SUPPOSITORIES

The purpose of this policy is to outline the use of spermicidal foam and suppositories are chemical substances which are toxic to sperm, and will decrease likelihood of implantation.

Procedure

Mode of Action

The foam or suppositories are placed in the vagina, as close as possible to the cervical opening, allowing the chemical action to kill sperm on contact. Some suppositories must dissolve over a period of 10-30 minutes after placement in the vagina, prior to intercourse.

These methods should be used in combination with other methods (i.e., condoms) to increase protection.

Effectiveness

Theoretical effectiveness rate is 97%.

Actual use effectiveness rate is 85.1%.

Advantages

- An effective, safe method of contraception if used correctly.
- May be purchased at a drugstore without a prescription and is readily accessible.

Disadvantages

- Some women consider the use of foam as “messy”.
- Must be used consistently with each act of intercourse.
- May cause irritation.
- May increase exposure to HIV and does not protect from STI.

Contraindications

There are no absolute or relative contraindications except allergy to foam or suppositories.

Side Effects

- Possible irritation or burning. If this occurs, change to a different brand.
- Couples having oral-genital sex have noted that foam has an unpleasant taste, although odorless and tasteless preparations are available.

Instructions to Client

Foam

1. Several brands of foam come in pre-loaded applicators, ready for use. If the foam comes in a separate container from the applicator, the applicator is filled to a designated mark by pressure applied directly on the top of the container or by tilting the applicator (instructions differ with brands).
2. Shake the can at least 20 times before using to insure adequate mixing of the spermicide and foam.
3. The filled applicator should be inserted as far as possible into the vagina and withdrawn about 1/2 inch. Then push the plunger to deposit the foam.
4. Foam protection lasts about 30 minutes. The foam should not be inserted more than 30 minutes prior to intercourse. If more than 30 minutes has elapsed, another applicator full of spermicide should be used. Insert a new applicator full of foam before every act of intercourse.
5. Douching is always discouraged; however, if an individual thinks they must douche, they should be instructed to wait 6- 8 hours after the last act of intercourse.
6. Wash the applicator with soap and lukewarm water.

Suppositories

1. Foil or plastic wrapper must be removed.
2. Slide the suppository into the vagina as far as it will go and as close to the cervix as possible to obtain maximal protection as it melts and foams.
3. After insertion, wait for the correct amount of time to elapse before having intercourse (times may vary with brands).
4. Use one suppository for each act of intercourse. If more than 1/2 hour has elapsed since insertion, insert another suppository to insure protection.
5. Douching is discouraged. If an individual thinks they must douche, they should be instructed to wait 6- 8 hours after the last act of intercourse.

Fertility Return

Return to fertility should be immediate after use. Given lower efficacy of the contraceptive sponge for pregnancy prevention, please recommend users also take a prenatal vitamin or folic acid supplement.

Date Revised	September 2023
References	Providing Quality Family Planning Services Recommendations of CDC and the U.S. Office of Population Affairs (QFP) [2014] https://www.hhs.gov/opa/guidelines/clinical-guidelines/quality-family-planning/index.html
Additional Resources	Summary Chart of U.S. Medical Eligibility Criteria for Contraceptive Use, 2020 https://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/contraception/pdf/summary-chart-us-medical-eligibility-criteria_508tagged.pdf