

C5.19 - VAGINAL CONTRACEPTIVE FILM (VCF)

Policy

The purpose of this policy is to outline the use of vaginal contraceptive film (VCF) is a 2.5 by 2.5-inch water-soluble square containing the spermicide Nonoxynol-9, a chemical substance that is toxic to sperm.

Procedure

Mode of Action

VCF is folded over the finger and placed as close to the cervix as possible. It dissolves quickly, but unlike foam, does not liquefy, but becomes a coating gel. VCF must be inserted at least five (5) minutes, and not more than one hour, prior to intercourse.

VCF should be used in combination with condoms for increased protection.

Effectiveness

Theoretic effectiveness equal to foam 97%.

Actual effectiveness is similar to foam 82-85%.

Effectiveness increased when used in conjunction with condoms.

Advantages

- Readily available over-the-counter without a prescription.
- An effective, safe contraceptive if used correctly.
- Very portable.
- No hormonal side effects.
- Does not have to be removed.

Disadvantages

- Must be used with each act of intercourse.
- May cause vaginal irritation and/or increased vaginal discharge.
- May increase exposure to HIV and does not protect from STIs.

Contraindications

No absolute or relative contraindications.

Allergy to known ingredients.

Side Effects

- Possible irritation/burning/vaginal discharge.
- May be unpleasant to the taste for clients having oral-genital sex.

Instructions to Client

1. Fold film in half over the index finger and insert into the vagina as close to the cervix as possible.
2. VCF should be inserted at least five minutes prior to intercourse to allow it to liquefy. If more than one hour elapses between insertion and intercourse, another film should be inserted.
3. Additional film should be used with each subsequent act of intercourse.
4. VCF does not need to be removed. Its residual gel is flushed from the vagina by vaginal and cervical fluids.
5. Douching is discouraged. If an individual thinks they must douche, they should be instructed to wait six hours or more to douche.
6. Does not protect from exposure to STI and may increase exposure to HIV.

Fertility Return

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

Potential Complications

None.

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)