

# Fact Sheet: Vaginal Methods – Phexxi & Spermicide



## Phexxi® (Prescription-only Contraceptive Gel)



## Spermicide



Brand Names	Phexxi®	Many brands!
How does it work?	Phexxi lowers the pH in your vagina. This makes it hard for sperm to move, lowering the chance of sperm reaching the egg. If sperm do not reach the egg, pregnancy cannot happen.	Spermicide kills sperm. If sperm do not reach the egg, pregnancy cannot happen. Spermicide comes in many forms: gel, cream, foam, film, and suppository.
How effective is it in preventing pregnancy?	14 in 100 people using Phexxi for a year get pregnant. You can use it alone. Using condoms with Phexxi works better to prevent pregnancy.	28 in 100 people using spermicide for a year get pregnant. You can use it alone. Using condoms with spermicide works better to prevent pregnancy.
How do I use it?	<p>Before you have sex:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) lie down or squat, and</li> <li>2) gently insert the gel-filled applicator deep into your vagina, like a tampon.</li> </ol> <p>Insert the full contents of 1 pre-filled applicator.</p> <p>Insert the full contents of 1 pre-filled applicator up to 1 hour before penis-in-vagina sex.</p> <p>There is no need to wait to have sex.</p> <p><b>Do not use</b> Phexxi with a contraceptive ring.</p>	<p>There are many forms of spermicide. Follow the guide that comes with the form you are using.</p> <p>Before you have sex:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) lie down or squat, and</li> <li>2) gently insert the spermicide deep into your vagina with your fingers or an applicator.</li> </ol> <p>Insert spermicide up to 30 minutes before penis-in-vagina sex.</p>
How long does it work for?	<p>Phexxi works right away and lasts up to 1 hour. It provides pregnancy protection for 1 act of penis-in-vagina sex.</p> <p>Each time you have penis-in-vagina sex, insert more gel.</p>	<p>Some types of spermicide work right away. Other types start working after 10 minutes.</p> <p>Each time you have penis-in-vagina sex, insert more spermicide.</p>
What if I stopped using it and had unprotected sex?	You can take Emergency Contraception (EC) <b>right away</b> . EC can prevent pregnancy up to 5 days after sex, and it works better the sooner you take it.	
Where can I get it?	You can get Phexxi with a prescription from your clinician.	You can get spermicide from drugstores, pharmacies, health centers, convenience stores, and online.

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### How will it affect me?

Some people may have burning, itching, irritation, or discomfort in the vagina, yeast infections, urinary tract infections, bacterial vaginosis, and vaginal discharge.

Do not use Phexxi if you have had a lot of vaginal infections, urinary tract infections, or other urinary problems.

Some people may feel soreness in their vagina or penis. If you have this problem, try switching brands of spermicide.

Most spermicides contain a chemical (nonoxynol-9) that can raise the risk of getting HIV if you use it often.

### What do people like about it?

- It is easy to carry.
- You can use it as part of sex play/foreplay.
- It has no hormones.
- It's safe to use while breast/chestfeeding.
- You only need to use it when you have penis-in-vagina sex.
- You can use it anytime during your monthly bleeding cycle and after an abortion, early pregnancy loss, or childbirth.
- It's safe to use with other medicines that treat vaginal infections.
- It does not raise your risk of getting HIV.

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### Are these methods safe?

Phexxi and spermicide are very safe. Serious problems are rare. If you have any of these symptoms, call your clinician:

- Allergic reactions
- Burning with urination
- Itching or soreness around vagina

If you are looking for protection from STIs and HIV, both the internal and external condom are great options.