

What You Should Know About ...

Male Condoms

See Glossary section for definitions of underlined words.

What is a condom?

- A condom is a latex rubber or polyurethane pouch. It fits over the penis during sexual intercourse.

How does the condom work?

- The condom is a barrier. It stops sperm from getting into the vagina, anus, or mouth during vaginal, anal or oral sex. It will prevent pregnancy 85-97% of the time.

Can the condom protect me from STIs and HIV?

- Yes. The condom offers protection against most sexually transmitted infections (STIs) including HIV. The female condom is the only other method of birth control that will do this.
- The condom may not protect you against the viruses that causes genital warts or herpes, if they are on parts of the skin not covered by a condom.

What kind of condom should I use?

- Use latex or polyurethane condoms. They will protect you from most sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV.
- Use lubricated latex condoms with a reservoir tip. Lubricated condoms offer better protection because they go on your penis and into the vagina or anus more easily. Non-lubricated condoms are good for oral sex.
- There are also condoms that come in different colours, flavours, sizes and textures (feel). Read the label to make sure they offer protection from STIs and pregnancy.

Where can I buy condoms?

- You can buy condoms at drug stores, some supermarkets and convenience stores, and washroom vending machines.
- ***Make sure that the packages say that the condom will protect you against pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections.***
- Your community clinic or public health nurse may give you low-cost or free condoms.

How do I use a condom?

Important: Make sure to put a condom on the erect (hard) penis before you have any contact with your partner's vagina, anus or mouth. This will prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections.

1. Carefully unwrap the condom package and take out the condom.
2. You can put a drop of water-based lubricant inside the tip of the condom for more pleasure.
3. Make sure the "ring" of the condom is on the outside so that the condom will roll easily down the penis.
4. If you are not circumcised, pull back your foreskin before you put on the condom.
5. Pinch the reservoir tip at the top of the condom to remove all the air. Otherwise the semen will have no place to go.
6. Pinch the tip with one hand (with your index finger, middle finger and the thumb). Then roll the condom all the way down the erect (hard) penis with the other hand. If you like, you can ask your partner to do this part. You can put water-based lubricant on the outside of the condom.
7. If you can't roll the condom down, the "ring" may be inside. Throw the condom away and use a new one.
8. After you ejaculate, hold on to the condom and pull out from your partner. If you leave your penis inside your partner's body until it is soft, the condom will leak. If you continue having sex and the condom is full of ejaculate or "cum", the condom may break.
9. Take the condom off away from your partner's vagina or anus.
10. Check to see if there were any tears or holes. Throw the condom away in the trash can. Do not flush condoms down the toilet.

What if the condom leaks or breaks?

See a health care provider as soon as possible for emergency contraception.

Can I reuse a condom?

No. You must use a new condom every time you ejaculate or have sex. Never reuse a condom.

What are some other things to remember?

- Practice using a condom a few times before you have sexual intercourse for the first time. It is easy to use a condom once you learn how.
- Always check the expiry date on the condom package or box. Don't use them if they are past their expiry date.
- Be careful not to tear the condom when opening the package.
- Store condoms in a cool dry place, like a handbag, drawer or loose pocket. Sunlight and heat can break down the latex in the condoms. For this reason, don't keep them in the glove compartment in your car, a back pocket or your wallet.
- Add water-based lubricants to the inside and outside of the condom to increase sexual pleasure. Also, condoms are less likely to break if you put a drop of water based lubricant on the outside of the condom.
- Use water-based lubricants only. Never use oil based lubricants like vaseline, cooking oil, margarine, hand cream or baby oil. They can break down latex condoms.

Where can I get more information?

- From your health care provider, community health clinic, or public health nurse.
- From the Facts of Life On-Line: e-mail your questions to thefactsoflife@serc.mb.ca.

If this method fails, and if you don't want to get pregnant, see a health care provider or pharmacist for emergency contraception as soon as you can.

Glossary:

Anus – The opening to the rectum (in the bum).

Emergency Contraception – Medication used to avoid pregnancy *after* sex when you didn't use birth control or the birth control didn't work (for example, the condom broke).

Ejaculate/Ejaculation – The release of semen from the penis. "Ejaculate" is also known as "come" or "cum" (street language.)

Penis – The external male sex organ, used for urination (peeing) and sexual intercourse.

Vagina – The muscular tube inside a woman's body where the menstrual blood comes out from the uterus, where a baby comes out from the uterus during childbirth, and where a penis can go in for vaginal intercourse.