

Male Condom



MALE CONDOM

What is a Male Condom?

A male condom helps protect partners from pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS. A male condom is shaped like a penis and is usually made of latex. It fits over an erect penis or a similarly-shaped sex toy. A male condom can be used for vaginal or anal intercourse, oral sex, or sex toys. It works by putting a barrier between partners so that bodily fluids, like semen, blood, and saliva, are not shared. This helps ensure that sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are not passed and pregnancy does not occur. Male condoms are the only currently available effective and reversible birth control method for men. Male condoms are 85-98% effective.

Use

Male condoms are only effective when placed just before intercourse or oral sex. At first, male condoms can be awkward to use; take your time and become familiar with them. Either partner can put a condom on the penis as part of sexual play. Learning how to put on a condom before sex play can help reduce anxiety with a partner. During sex, water-based lubricants can increase pleasure and comfort.

DO NOT use two condoms at once. Male condoms and female condoms should not be used at the same time. Placing two male condoms on a penis can raise the chance of tearing.

After sex, throw away the condom. **DO NOT REUSE** it. Do not use the same condom for vaginal and anal intercourse.

Intercourse

The male condom is placed on a man's erect penis. Before putting on the condom, uncircumcised men may find it useful to pull back the foreskin. With one hand, squeeze a half-inch of the condom's tip to remove air and leave room for semen. With your other hand, you can unroll the condom to the base of the penis. The band of latex at the open end of a male condom helps to keep it from slipping during intercourse.

After ejaculating, withdraw the penis before losing the erection. To keep sperm from leaking out, hold the condom on the penis during withdrawal. Either partner can hold onto the rim.

Throw away the condom and use a new one if sex continues. Maintain distance between you and your partner's genitals to prevent infection or pregnancy. Sperm may still be on the penis after the condom is taken off.

Oral Sex

Most people prefer male condoms *without* spermicide for oral sex. You can also buy flavored male condoms.

For oral sex on a woman, male condoms can be used as a barrier to protect against the spread of infections. Cut off the closed tip of the condom. Make another cut along the side of the condom. This will give you a rectangular sheet. Place the sheet over the genitals or over a partner's mouth. Be careful to keep any areas of contact fully covered by the condom during oral sex. After oral sex, throw away the condom.

For oral sex on a man, the condom is placed on the penis as it would be for intercourse. After oral sex, throw away the condom.

Sex Toys

If you and your partner choose to share a toy, like a dildo, using a male condom on the toy can help prevent the spread of infection. Change the condom between uses by different partners. **DO NOT** use the same condom for more than one person.

Add Lubrication

The most common causes of condom failure are breakage and slipping. To prevent a breakage, make sure there is enough lubrication from natural secretions or a water-based lubricant. Dryness creates more friction and can tear a condom. Adding lubrication can also increase pleasure for both partners and encourage continued use of condoms.

To use lubricant with a male condom, add one or two drops into the tip of the condom before putting it on. Add more around the vaginal opening, and on the inner lips and clitoris. If the vagina or the condom becomes less lubricated during sex, you can add a few more drops of lubricant or a little bit of water.

Latex or polyurethane barriers -- male condoms, female condoms, dental dams or gloves can be more effective and comfortable for both partners when used with a lubricant from a bottle or tube. Use only lubricants marked for sexual use or as latex-safe such as Astroglide or KY Liquid. Do not use vaseline, creams, edible oils or vaginal medications because they can cause latex condoms to break.

To keep a condom from slipping off, make sure the rim stays near the base of the penis during intercourse. This is especially important at the end as the penis is withdrawn.

Your Health

There is a chance that male condoms could break or slip during sex. If this occurs, a woman may consider taking Emergency Contraception (the Morning After Pill or Plan B) to prevent pregnancy.

Care

Oil-based lubricants, like vaseline or vegetable/olive oils, weaken male condoms and make them less effective.

Store condoms in a cool, dry place. Exposure to heat such as a hot glove compartment in a car, or friction such as a back-pocket wallet, can create microscopic holes. Check the condom's expiration date before using it.

Side Effects

If you or your partner experience genital burning or itching, it may be a sign of an allergy to either the condom or spermicide used. If you used a latex condom, try using condoms without latex. You can also try a spermicide with different chemicals than the one you used. If your spermicide contains nonoxynol-9, try one without it.

Advantages

- ◆ Prevents the spread of sexually transmitted infections, including HIV and AIDS.
- ◆ Birth control for men.
- ◆ Available without a prescription.
- ◆ No hormonal side effects.
- ◆ Use can be part of sex play.
- ◆ Easy to use.
- ◆ Does not affect future fertility.
- ◆ May decrease women's risk for developing pre-cancerous cells on the cervix.

Disadvantages

- ◆ Must be readily available.
- ◆ Can interrupt sex play.
- ◆ Can break or leak.
- ◆ Possible allergic reaction.
- ◆ Decreased sensation for some people.

Emergency Contraception (The "Morning After" Pill – "Plan B" – "EC")

You can prevent pregnancy *after* sexual intercourse by taking Emergency Contraception pills (Plan B). Plan B works by giving the body a short burst of synthetic hormones that disrupt the hormone patterns needed for a pregnancy to start. Emergency Contraception is most effective in the first 24-48 hours after unprotected intercourse, but it can work for several days.

To find Emergency Contraception, see this website: ec.princeton.edu. If you already have birth control pills in your possession, this website explains how to use them as emergency contraception.

In Washington State, you can get Plan B directly from your pharmacy. Call ahead to make sure they have it in stock. Some women are buying Plan B in advance (it costs around \$35-50) so they will have it on hand if they need it.

More Info

- *Our Bodies, Ourselves.* www.ourbodiesourselves.org
- Cervical Barriers Advancement Society at www.cervicalbarriers.org
- Feminist Women's Health Center at www.FWHC.org
- www.Birth-Control-Comparison.info
- www.sexuality.org
- Using Condoms pages at Avert – Averting HIV and AIDS at www.avert.org/usecond.htm
- Plan B Emergency Contraception at ec.princeton.edu or www.not-2-late.com
- www.CedarRiverClinics.org