

Male Condom



MALE CONDOM

What is a Male Condom?

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

Use

Male condoms are only effective when placed just before intercourse or oral sex. At first, 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: Placing two male condoms on a penis can raise the chance of tearing. Male condoms and female condoms should not be used at the same time.

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, unroll the condom to the base of the penis. The band of latex at the open end of the condom helps to keep it from slipping during intercourse.

After ejaculating, withdraw the penis before losing the erection. Hold the condom on the penis during withdrawal to keep sperm from leaking out. 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 (such as a dildo) using a male condom on the toy can help prevent the spread of infection. **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 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, the inner lips and the 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 as the penis is withdrawn after sex play.

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.

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.

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 and Disadvantages

Advantages

- ◆ Prevents the spread of sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/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 a woman'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

You can prevent pregnancy after unprotected intercourse by having a copper IUD inserted within one week of unprotected intercourse or by taking emergency contraception pills. The pills work best in the first 24 to 48 hours but may work for several days. You can get one brand, Plan B, from your pharmacy without a prescription if you are 17 years or older. If you are under 17 or if you want to use your insurance, you can also get a prescription.

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 so they will have it on hand if they need it.

Further Resources

- ◆ *Our Bodies, Ourselves*. www.ourbodiesourselves.org
- ◆ Feminist Women's Health Center at www.FWHC.org
- ◆ Using Condoms pages at Avert – Averting HIV and AIDS at www.avert.org/usecond.htm
- ◆ www.sexuality.org
- ◆ If you are uninsured and live in Washington State, you may qualify for FREE birth control under the State sponsored program called Take Charge. Teens do not need parent's permission. Call 800-770-4334 to find out if you qualify for Take Charge. Then you can apply for Take Charge at Cedar River Clinics.

Cedar River Clinics in Renton and Tacoma, WA make birth control and abortion accessible so that women may decide their futures.

www.CedarRiverClinics.org or 800-572-4223

www.Birth-Control-Comparison.info

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