

Male Condom

How the male condom works:

The condom is a thin sheath that fits over the erect penis. It works as a barrier to stop sperm from getting into the vagina. It offers protection against pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections.

Condoms are made from latex (often called “rubbers”), natural membrane (lambskin) or plastic (polyurethane).

How to use the male condom:

Before sex:

- Have several condoms on hand in case the first one is damaged or torn.
- Discuss condom use with your partner before sexual activity begins.
- Check for expiration date on each condom before use and do not use condoms past their expiration date.
- Open the condom package carefully so you don't damage the condom.
- Put the condom on before the penis touches the partner's genitals.
- Check to see that you are holding the condom so it will unroll the right way with the rolled ring
on the outside.
- Unroll the condom down the entire length of the penis. Leave half an inch at the tip of the condom as a semen receptacle and squeeze out excess air from the tip and sides.
- Store condoms in a cool, dry place and out of direct sunlight.
- Store condoms away from any heat source that can weaken the latex .
- Adequate lubrication is important to decrease the chance of breakage. Use lubricated condoms or add a lubricant to the vagina. For latex condoms, use only water-based lubricants like K-Y jelly, spermicidal creams or foam, etc. Do not use oil-based lubricants, such as baby oil or petroleum jelly, which can damage the condom.
- If the condom breaks or comes off during sex but before ejaculation, stop and put on a new condom.
- Some vaginal medications (e.g., for yeast infections) can damage latex condoms and make them break. Remain abstinent, use polyurethane condoms or other birth control until your infection is cured.

After sex:

- Soon after ejaculation, withdraw the penis while it is still hard. Hold the condom firmly against the base of the penis to prevent slipping and leaking of semen.
- Check the condom for visible damage or leaks.
- Throw it away (don't flush it!).

If you repeat sexual intercourse:

- Use a new condom from “start to finish” with each act of anal, vaginal, or oral sex. Do not reuse condoms.

Effectiveness:

Among couples who use condoms correctly and every time they have sex, in one year two in 100 will get pregnant (98% effective). Condoms are very effective protection from pregnancy and

STIs. If you don't use one every time, or if it slips, breaks or is put on or taken off incorrectly (typical use), your chances of pregnancy go up. Condom use becomes more effective with practice. Many people try different brands or types before finding the condom that is most comfortable. Some couples make putting on the condom a part of lovemaking. Condoms are also more effective if used along with a vaginal spermicide, such as contraceptive foam.

If your condom breaks or slips, you can use emergency contraception to prevent pregnancy. Call your local family planning clinic or 1-888-NOT-2-LATE to find out where you can get EC.

Benefits of the condom:

Condoms (latex and polyurethane) are safe and effective for preventing pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV. Because they help protect against STIs, condoms lower your long term risk for infertility. After ejaculation, you have immediate, visible proof of effectiveness when you can see semen within the condom. Condoms are inexpensive and easy to get from many sources, and easy to carry discreetly. Some users report sexual enhancement (i.e., longer-lasting erections). There are few side effects; if you or your partner have a latex allergy, you can switch to polyurethane condoms.

Potential side effects or disadvantages:

Some people are allergic to latex (rubber). Some users complain that condoms reduce sensitivity or interrupt lovemaking. Some users cannot consistently maintain an erection during condom use.

GENERAL REFERENCE: Contraceptive Technology: 18th Rev. Ed., 2004 (over)

Center for Health Training

1809 Seventh Avenue, Suite 400

Seattle, WA 98101-1341

(206) 447.9538 *tel*

(206) 447.9539 *fax*

www.centerforhealthtraining.org *website*

seattle@jba-cht.com *email*

Revised October 2005