



CONTRACEPTION



Condoms – male and female



Condoms are worn during sexual activity as a contraceptive and to prevent infection. They are available for men and women.

What is the male condom?

Condoms are made of thin, strong, latex rubber or polyurethane. A condom is rolled onto the erect penis before vaginal, anal or oral sex. It can only be used once.

How does the male condom work?

It is a physical barrier that stops body fluids (eg, semen, vaginal fluids) passing between sexual partners.

How effective is the male condom?

When used correctly and consistently, it can be 96-99.6% effective as a contraceptive method. If not used correctly and consistently, the failure rate will be higher.

What are the advantages of using a male condom?

- helps protect women and men against sexually transmitted infections (STIs)
- available from supermarkets, pharmacies and vending machines at low cost

- no significant medical risks or side effects (polyurethane condoms are available for people with a latex allergy)

What are the disadvantages of using a male condom?

- a small number of people are sensitive to latex, spermicide or lubricant
- the interruption to sexual activity can be a concern for some people
- some people complain of reduced sensitivity during sexual intercourse
- breakages can occur or it could slip off

Is the male condom suitable for everyone?

Latex allergy occurs in a small number of men and women. Non-latex condoms are now available and can be used in this situation. Female condoms may also be an option for people who are sensitive to latex.

Some men cannot maintain an erection when wearing a condom. Men whose erections are less firm may also find it difficult to use a male condom.

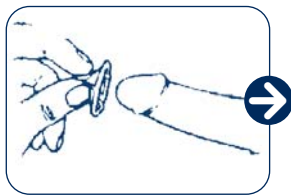
How do I use a male condom?



Take care when opening condom packets – teeth and fingernails may cause damage to the condom.



Condoms should be placed on the erect penis before contact with the sexual partner's genitals.



Ensure there is room to collect semen at the tip of the condom. Unroll it down to the base of the penis. Apply water-based lubricant freely to the condom both before and during intercourse to help prevent breakages and to increase comfort.



Withdraw the penis immediately after ejaculation and before it becomes soft.



Remove the condom from the penis. Be careful not to allow the condom or the penis to touch the sexual partner's genitals. Dispose of the used condom in a rubbish bin.

Why is lubrication important?

Lubrication is the wetness that makes penetration more comfortable during intercourse. While most condoms are already lubricated, additional water-based lubrication is recommended as this will increase comfort and help prevent breakages. Water-based lubricants are available from pharmacies and supermarkets; a number of brands are available so find one that suits. Saliva (spit) is not usually slippery enough to use but may help if nothing else is available.

Oil-based lubricants can weaken male condoms, and should not be used. These include petroleum jelly (eg, Vaseline), cooking oil, baby oil, suntan oil, massage oil, hand lotions or creams.

Why does a male condom slip or break?

The condom may slip or break if:

- it is not put on correctly
- there is not enough lubrication during sexual intercourse
- an oil-based lubricant is used
- a vaginal cream used for thrush is oil-based, so check with the chemist before using
- it is torn by fingernails, jewellery or teeth
- sexual intercourse is prolonged or very vigorous
- the penis loses erection before withdrawal
- the penis and condom are not held securely when withdrawing
- the condom is too big or small for the penis
- the rubber loses strength when it is past its use-by-date, or after exposure to light or heat

What should I do if a male condom slips or breaks?

Emergency contraception can be used to help prevent pregnancy if a condom slips or breaks. Emergency contraception is taken by the female partner and can be obtained from pharmacies, general practitioners (GPs), Sexual Health or Family Planning Queensland (FPQ) clinics.

Where is the male condom available?

Male condoms are available from clinics, pharmacies, supermarkets and vending machines. They come in different shapes, thicknesses, flavours, textures, sizes and colours.

What is the female condom?

It is a polyurethane sheath, which is inserted into the vagina before sexual intercourse. It is about 15cm long and has two flexible rings to keep it in place in the vagina. It can only be used once.

How does the female condom work?

It is a physical barrier that stops body fluids (eg, semen and vaginal fluids) passing between sexual partners.

How effective is the female condom?

When used correctly, the female condom can be up to 95% effective as a contraceptive method. If not used correctly and consistently, the failure rate will be higher.

What are the advantages of the female condom?

- helps protect both men and women against STIs
- can be used with any kind of lubricant, including oil-based lubricants
- the polyurethane condom allows for heat transmission, which may make sex more enjoyable
- can be inserted prior to sexual activity
- its size and shape allows it to protect more of the area around the vagina
- the penis does not have to be withdrawn immediately after intercourse

What are the disadvantages of using the female condom?

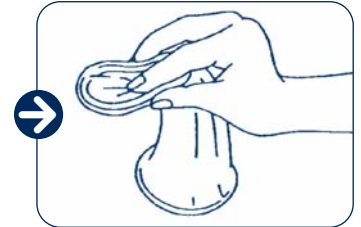
- not as widely available as the male condom
- takes some practice to use correctly
- suitable for vaginal sex only, not anal sex
- more expensive than the male condom

Is the female condom suitable for everyone?

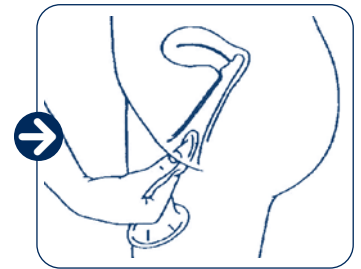
The female condom is suitable for most people. It can be used if either partner is sensitive or allergic to the latex in male condoms.

How do I insert the female condom?

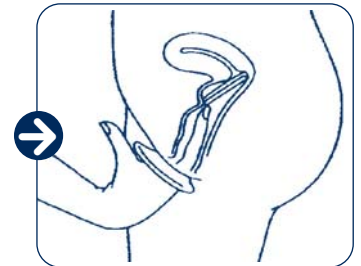
Hold the inner ring (at the closed end of the condom).



Insert the condom into the vagina as far as it will go.



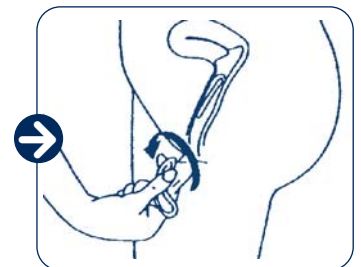
With your finger inside the condom, push it up into the vagina (being careful not to twist the condom). The outer ring should remain outside the vagina, resting against the vulva.



It is important to guide the penis into the condom.



To remove, squeeze and twist the outer ring and pull out the condom. Dispose of the used condom in a rubbish bin.



NOTES

Why is lubrication important?

Additional lubrication is recommended with female condoms to avoid slippage and may increase comfort and pleasure. Both water-based and oil-based lubricants can be used.

What should I do if a female condom slips or breaks?

Emergency contraception can be used to help prevent pregnancy if a condom slips or breaks. Emergency contraception is taken by the female partner and can be obtained from pharmacies, GPs, Sexual Health or FPQ clinics.

Where is the female condom available?

Availability of female condoms is limited. Contact Sexual Health or Family Planning clinics for information on availability.

Disclaimer

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Version 2 / January 2008

P: 01/2008 5m

Funded with assistance by  **Queensland Government**
Queensland Health

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