

Fact Sheet - English

THE FEMALE CONDOM



What Is The Female Condom?

The female condom is like a large male condom. It is about 15cm long and has two flexible rings, one at each end, to keep it in place in the vagina. One of the rings is closed and this end rests inside the woman's vagina. The other ring, which is open, rests outside. Most regular condoms are made of latex (rubber), but the female condom is made of polyurethane which can make sex feel more pleasurable. It is prelubricated. A woman wears a female condom in her vagina to prevent pregnancy. It also helps to protect against sexually transmissible infections (STIs) including HIV.



How Does The Female Condom Work?

It works by catching the semen when the man ejaculates. Then the sperm in the semen cannot travel up to meet an egg and start a pregnancy.

How Well Does It Work?

When used correctly it is up to 95% effective which means that approximately 5 women out of every 100 women who use the female condom for a year will become pregnant. However with typical (real-life use), it is only 79% effective meaning that 21 women in every 100 may fall pregnant in a year.

Female condoms can be combined with other methods of contraception including contraceptive pills, vaginal rings, contraceptive injections, implants and IUDs. This provides effective contraception and prevents STIs at the same time.

Who Can Use A Female Condom?

It is suitable for most people, and designed to fit all women. It can be used by those who are allergic or sensitive to latex condoms.

How Do You Get Female Condoms?

You can buy female condoms from Family Planning clinics, most sexual health clinics and online. Some women's health clinics and pharmacies also stock them.

How Do You Use The Female Condom?

The ring at the open end covers the area around the opening of the vagina. You use the inner ring to insert the female condom. It also helps to hold the female condom in place.

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How To Insert The Female Condom

- Hold the inner ring (the closed end of the condom) and squeeze the edges of this ring together
- Insert this end as far as possible into the vagina. Upon release, the ring will open to hold the condom in place
- With your fingers inside the condom, push it up into the vagina. The outer ring should remain outside the vagina, resting against the labia
- Be sure the condom has not twisted
- Guide the penis into the vagina during sex

How To Remove The Female Condom

To remove the condom after sex, twist the outer ring and pull the condom out. Wrap it in some tissue and dispose of the condom in a rubbish bin.

Things To Remember

Each female condom can be used ONE TIME ONLY.

The female condom CANNOT be used with the male condom. This could make the female condom move out of place or the male condom could slip off.

If you forget to use the female condom or you feel that it has not worked properly, you can buy the emergency contraceptive pill from a pharmacy. The emergency pill can be used within 120 hours of unprotected sex to reduce the chance of getting pregnant.

For Further Information

- Contact the Family Planning NSW Talkline on 1300 658 886 or go to www.fpnsw.org.au/talkline
- NRS (for deaf) 133 677
- Or visit your nearest Family Planning clinic

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