

Fact Sheet - English

THE MALE CONDOM



What Is The Male Condom?

The male condom is a tube of fine latex rubber which is closed at one end. It is worn on an erect (stiff) penis during sex, to prevent pregnancy. There are also non-latex male condoms made from a material called polyurethane. The male condom is usually just called a 'condom'. Condoms also help to prevent sexually transmissible infections (STIs), including HIV.



How Does A Condom Work?

It catches 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?

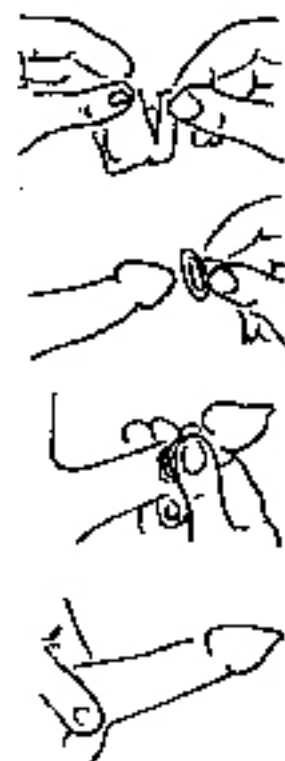
Condoms can work very well if they are used correctly every time. They are between 82% and 98% effective, depending how well they are used. This means that if 100 couples use them for a year then between 2 and 18 women will become pregnant.

Who Can Use A Condom?

Most men can use a condom.

How Do You Use A Condom?

- Condoms are individually wrapped in packets, so first carefully open the packet, making sure you do not tear the condom with your fingernails
- The condom will be rolled up. It will look like a circle of loose fine rubber with a thick rim, which is actually the rolled up condom. Make sure the rim is rolled towards the centre on the side facing you. This is important as it will then roll down properly
- Hold and squeeze the centre of the circle where the condom is loose, with your thumb and first two fingers. This will make space for the semen when you come. Some condoms have a special shape like a nipple at the end especially for this purpose
- The penis must be erect before you put on the condom. With the condom still rolled up, and while still holding the tip, put the condom on the head of the penis like a cap
- Using your other hand (thumb and first two fingers), roll the condom all the way down to the base of the penis
- Put some additional water-based lubricant on the outside of the condom if required



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- After sex and before the penis has become soft, hold onto the condom at the base of the penis so that the condom does not come off, and semen does not leak out, and carefully pull away from your partner
- Take off the condom and tie a knot in the open end to keep the semen inside the condom
- Wrap the condom in a tissue or some paper, and put it in the bin. Do not flush it down the toilet



Remember:

- Store condoms away from heat and sunlight
- Check the expiry date on the pack before you use it
- Check that the condom packet has not been torn or opened
- Do not have any genital contact before you put the condom on

Are There Any Side Effects?

There are no side effects, unless you are allergic to latex rubber or to the lubricant. This is very rare.

You can use non-latex polyurethane condoms as an alternative if you, or your partner, are allergic to latex rubber.

How Do You Get Condoms?

You can buy latex condoms from Family Planning Clinics, pharmacies, sexual health clinics, vending machines, supermarkets and by mail order. Non-latex condoms are available at most large supermarkets and pharmacies.

Things To Remember

A condom should be used ONE TIME ONLY.

Condoms can perish so keep them in a cool place and use them before the expiry date, otherwise they may break. Oil based lubricants can also make latex condoms break.

Condoms are self-lubricated but additional water-based lubricants can be also be used on the outside of the condom.

If you forget to use a condom, or you think it has not worked e.g. it breaks or slips off during sex, you can buy the emergency contraceptive pill (ECP) from a pharmacy. A woman can take the ECP within 120 hours after unprotected sex, to reduce the chance of pregnancy.

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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