



## BASIC INFORMATION

### WHO SHOULD USE A CONDOM?

- Condoms are used for both birth control and reducing the risk of disease. Some people think that other forms of birth control will also protect them against disease. This is not true. Even if you use another form of birth control, you need a condom to help reduce the risk of getting STDs (sexually transmitted diseases) including the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection.
- Condoms do not make sex 100% safe, but, if properly used, they can reduce the chance of contracting STDs. This can mean protection not only for you and your partner, but also for any children you may have in the future.

### CHOOSING A CONDOM

Read the label and look for the following:

- The condoms should be made of latex (rubber) or made of polyurethane.
- It should say that the condoms are to prevent disease, and if used properly, latex condoms help reduce risk of HIV transmission and many other STDs. If the package doesn't say anything about preventing disease, the condoms may not provide the protection you need. Novelty condoms, for example, will not be labeled for either disease- or pregnancy-prevention. Condoms that don't cover the entire penis are not labeled for disease prevention and should not be used for this purpose. For proper protection, a condom must unroll to cover the entire penis.
- Check the expiration date (EXP followed by date). The condom should not be purchased or used after that date.
- Condoms are available in many stores and from vending machines. If buying condoms from vending machines, check for proper labeling. Do not buy condoms from a vending machine located where it may be subject to extreme temperatures or direct sunlight.
- Condoms should be stored in a cool, dry place out of direct sunlight. Closets or drawers usually make good storage places. Condoms should not be kept in a pocket, wallet, or purse for more than a few hours at a time because they may be exposed to extreme temperatures.

### HOW TO USE A CONDOM

- When opening a condom, handle the package gently. Don't use teeth, sharp fingernails, scissors, or other sharp instruments. These may damage the condom. Make sure you can see what you're doing!
- After you open the package, inspect the condom. If the material sticks to itself or is gummy, the condom is no good. Check the condom top for other obvious damage such as brittleness, tears, and holes. Do not unroll the condom to check it; this could damage it.
- Use a new condom at the beginning of every sexual act (vaginal or anal intercourse and oral sex).
- Put the condom on as soon as the penis is erect and before any contact is made between the penis and any part of the partner's body. Don't delay condom use. Studies have shown that while pre-ejaculatory fluid is not semen, it does contain HIV.
- If the condom does not have a reservoir tip, pinch the tip enough to leave a half-inch space for semen to collect. Make sure to squeeze out any air in the tip to help keep the condom from breaking.
- While holding the condom by the rim (and pinching the half-inch tip, if needed), place the condom on top of the penis. Then, continuing to hold it by the rim, unroll it all the way to the base of the penis. If you are using water-based lubricant, you can put more on the outside of the condom.
- If you feel the condom break, stop right away, withdraw, and put on a new condom.
- After ejaculation and before the penis gets soft, grip the rim of the condom and carefully withdraw.
- To remove the condom, gently pull it off the penis, being careful the semen doesn't spill out.
- Wrap the used condom in a tissue and throw it in the trash. Because condoms may cause problems in sewers, don't flush them down the toilet. Then wash your hands with soap and warm water.

# CONDOM USAGE TO PREVENT STDs

(Sheet 2 of 2)

NOLENSVILLE FAMILY MEDICINE

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## PRECAUTION

Condoms provide good protection for vaginal and oral sex (where the penis is in contact with the mouth). The protection they give for anal sex is questionable. The Surgeon General of the Public Health Service has said, "Condoms provide some protection, but anal intercourse is simply too dangerous a practice." Condoms may be more likely to break during anal intercourse than during other types of sex. This is due to the greater amount of friction and other stresses involved. Even if the condom doesn't break, anal intercourse is very risky because it can cause rectal tissue to tear and bleed. This allows disease germs to pass more easily from one partner to another.

## SPERMICIDES

Spermicides (gels, creams, foams, or films), which kill sperm, are used for birth control, either alone or with barrier contraceptives such as the diaphragm or cervical cap. A spermicide called nonoxynol 9 has been widely used with condoms to supposedly help reduce the risk of STD transmission. Studies now show that nonoxynol 9 does not reduce the risk of transmission of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) or other STDs during intercourse. Some condoms come with nonoxynol-9 already added but they are not recommended for prevention of STDs. The best STD and HIV barrier is a latex condom without nonoxynol-9. Nevertheless, a condom that is lubricated with nonoxynol-9 is safer than unprotected sex with no condom at all. Condom packages are required to be labeled with the expiration date of the spermicide, and they should not be used after that date. In females, frequent use of spermicides containing nonoxynol 9 can cause vaginal irritation and lesions (sores), which may actually increase the possibility of transmitting an STD from an infected partner.

## LUBRICANTS

Lubricants may help prevent condoms from breaking during use. They may prevent irritation that might increase the chance of infection. Some condoms come lubricated with dry silicone, jelly, or cream, or you can add water-based lubricants specifically made for this purpose (for example, K-Y Lubricating Jelly). If you use a separate lubricant, never use a product that contains oils, fats, or greases such as a petroleum-based jelly (for example, Vaseline), baby oil or lotion, hand or body lotion, cooking shortening, or oily cosmetics such as cold creams. These can seriously weaken latex, causing a condom to tear easily. If you use a spermicide, you do not necessarily need to use a lubricant because some spermicide acts as a lubricant.

## TO LEARN MORE

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention STD Hotline (800) 227-8922; website: [www.cdc.gov/std](http://www.cdc.gov/std).



## NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF

You have questions about the use of condoms.

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Special notes:

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More notes on the back of this page