

# Male Condoms

## What is a condom?

A condom is a fine barrier which is rolled on to a man's penis before sex. It is used as a barrier to stop sperm and infection passing between sexual partners. It is usually made of rubber.

Condoms are used for

- vaginal sex
- anal sex
- oral sex.

## Why use condoms?

They help protect against pregnancy and sexually transmissible infections (STIs), including HIV which can lead to AIDS.

Partners share responsibility for safer sex and contraception.

Most other methods of contraception don't protect you against STIs including HIV. To protect yourself use condoms as well.

Condoms

- are easy to get
- are easy to use
- have no side effects (unless you are allergic to rubber)
- help prevent cancer of the cervix.

## How safe are condoms?

If used correctly every time you have sexual intercourse, condoms provide very good protection from pregnancy and infection.

### Pregnancy

When condoms are used correctly every time a woman and a man have sexual intercourse, 2 women out of 100 will get pregnant each year.

### Infection

Viruses such as HIV cannot pass through an unbroken rubber condom.

Two studies prove the safety of condoms. The studies involved couples where one person was HIV positive and the other was not infected.

The first study showed that if condoms were used correctly, none of the uninfected partners got HIV.

Where condoms were not used correctly, 10 out of every 100 partners became infected.

The second study showed that 2 out of 100 women became infected when condoms were always used.

Fifteen out of 100 women became infected if condoms were not used every time.

Condoms are known to greatly reduce the risk of catching other STIs such as HIV, chlamydia and gonorrhoea.

Condoms also reduce the risk of syphilis, herpes and wart virus infection, but sometimes skin not covered by the condom can be infected with these viruses.

## Why condoms slip or break

- not put on correctly
- torn by fingernails, jewellery or teeth
- not enough lubrication (wetness) during sexual intercourse
- wrong lubricant is used
- prolonged or very vigorous sexual intercourse
- penis goes soft before withdrawal
- condom slips off during withdrawal
- rubber loses its strength when condoms are kept in a warm place like a glovebox or hip pocket
- rubber loses its strength because the condoms are past "use by" date
- rubber damaged by some thrush treatments (Clotrimazole is least likely to damage condoms).

Talk to your health professional if you have problems using condoms.

## Why is lubricant important?

Lubrication is the wetness that makes it easy to slide in and out during sex. If there is not enough, the condom is much more likely to break. Extra lubrication should always be used particularly for anal sex.

## Lubricants

### Do use

Water-based lubricants such as

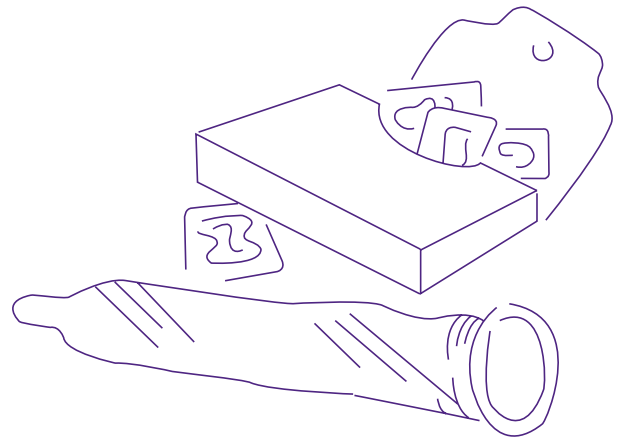
- KY Jelly
- Sylk
- Glyde
- Top Gel

### Do not use

Oil based lubricants such as

- petroleum jelly (vaseline)
- baby oil
- suntan oils
- cooking oils
- butter and margarine
- hand lotion
- massage oils.

**Oil based lubricants damage rubber. Spit (saliva) is not usually slippery enough to use as a lubricant but may help if nothing else is available.**



## What about spermicide?

Spermicides are no longer recommended for condom use as they can irritate sensitive skin and increase the risk of getting a sexually transmissible infection.

## What if a condom breaks?

If your main concern is pregnancy go to a Family Planning clinic, doctor or a pharmacy for emergency contraception within 72 hours (within 24 hours if possible).

If you are worried about STIs talk to a health professional.

If you think your condom has broken before ejaculation (cumming), stop and put on a new condom.

## How to talk about using condoms

People can give lots of reasons for not using a condom.

Here are some suggestions of what to say

- It doesn't feel so good  
*It does feel different, but it can still feel good*
- Trust me, I haven't got anything  
*It's not that I don't trust you, but this way we can be sure we are both safe*
- I don't have any condoms  
*I do or*  
*We can buy some at the dairy, pub, supermarket*
- But you're on the pill, why do I need to use a condom?  
*The pill doesn't give any protection against STIs*
- I hate them  
*That's a shame, because I won't have sex without one*
- Condoms are boring  
*I'm sure we can think of ways to make them fun.*

## Where can you get condoms?

Condoms can be bought from Family Planning clinics, chemists, supermarkets, pubs, public toilets, garages, nightclubs, dairies, mail order and sex shops. It is cheaper to get them on prescription from a Family Planning Clinic, a Sexual Health Centre or a doctor.

## What else?

- Before using a condom for the first time, practise putting them on
- If you or your partner do not want to use a condom, there are other safe and pleasurable sexual things that you can do together instead of sexual intercourse. Try masturbating each other, massage, cuddling ... use your imagination
- If a condom is not comfortable, try a different brand
- Condoms come in different sizes, shapes, thicknesses, flavours, textures and colours. Try some to see which suit you best
- Do not rely on novelty condoms for protection against pregnancy and STIs
- Always check the expiry (use by) date on the pack
- If you are allergic to rubber, special condoms are available – ask your health professional.

## Condoms do protect you

Some people say it isn't worth using condoms because they have holes big enough for viruses to get through. This is not true. Bacteria and viruses such as HIV cannot pass through an undamaged condom. Electronically tested condoms have been checked for holes. This is written on the packet of reliable brands.

**You are legally allowed to buy condoms at any age.**

## How to use a condom

Check the condom pack to make sure the expiry date has not passed.

Open the packet carefully. Finger nails, rings and teeth can tear the condom.

Make sure the penis does not touch the partner's vagina, mouth or anus before being covered by a condom.

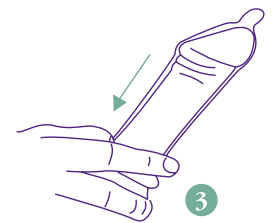
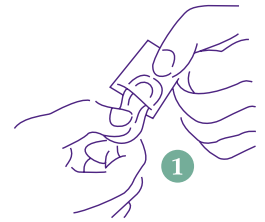
Check that the condom is the right way up. Pinch the tip of the condom to remove any air.

Roll the condom on the hard penis all the way down to the base.

Use a water-based lubricant (eg, KY Jelly, Wet Stuff, Sylk and Top Gel). Oil-based lubricants such as vaseline can cause latex or rubber condoms to break.

After cuming and when withdrawing hold the condom on the base of the penis so that no semen is spilt.

Wrap the used condom in tissue or toilet paper and put it in the rubbish.



**Use a new condom and lube each time you have sex!**

**For more information about Family Planning resources, clinics and health promotion services go to our web site, [familyplanning.org.nz](http://familyplanning.org.nz)**

Family Planning provides confidential and non-judgemental sexual and reproductive health and education services. Please contact us for further information.

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