

Condoms & HIV

Condoms are the best way to prevent HIV infection and other STIs.

Find out how to use them correctly and how to have great sex with them.

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Sources:
www.avert.org/fact-sheet-sources



What is a condom?





A condom is a thin piece of synthetic material that fits over the penis (external or male condom) or inside the vagina or anus (internal or female condom) during sex.

When used correctly, condoms prevent HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs), as well as preventing pregnancy.

Condoms are usually made of latex but some people are allergic to latex. Polyurethane or polyisoprene condoms are also available.

How do condoms work?

Sexual fluids such as semen, vaginal fluids and blood can transmit HIV and other STIs. Using a condom stops these fluids entering the other person's body during sex. The main entry points for HIV are the:




-  vagina
-  anus
-  penis (urethra)
-  mouth
(only if someone has large open sores or bleeding gums).

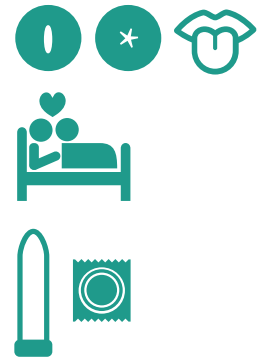
Remember to put on a condom before you start any penetrative sexual activities.






When should I use a condom?

Use a condom:

-  during vaginal, anal and oral sex
-  every time you have sex
-  on shared sex toys; put a new condom on for each partner



Remember to:



-   use a new condom each time you have sex
-  always use extra water-based lubricant during anal sex.

Some STIs are transmitted by skin-to-skin contact – condoms can't protect you from these.



Know your rights

You have the right to:

-  insist on using a condom
-  refuse sex if your partner doesn't agree to use a condom.



Condom types

Internal condom



It's also called the female condom and it's made of polyurethane. It's wider than the external condom with a flexible ring at either end; it fits inside the vagina or anus.

You can also protect yourself during oral sex by using a dental dam which is a small sheet of latex. Or, try a flavoured condom cut open!

External condom



It's also called the male condom and is usually made of latex and it's the most common type; it fits over the penis.

External (male) condom shapes and sizes:



standard condoms have straight sides
fitted condoms are indented below the head of the penis

some condoms are wider over the head of the penis



extra strong condoms are thicker – important for anal sex.



Internal (female) condoms come in different shapes, sizes and flavours.

What do you do if the condom splits?

If this happens during sex:



withdraw the penis immediately and use a new condom



access emergency contraception if not using other contraceptive methods



both partners should get tested for HIV and other STIs



access emergency HIV treatment if you think you've been put at risk of HIV infection.

To reduce the risk of a condom splitting:



- ✗ don't use two at the same time!
Using an external condom at the same time as an internal condom can cause friction and the condoms will be more likely to split.
- ✗ don't double up on the same types either.

If you need any more information you can get advice from a sexual health professional.

What is lubricant and when should I use it?

Lubricant (or lube) is a water-, silicone- or oil-based substance. Many condoms are covered in some lubricant.

Use extra lubricant:

- ✓ on the outside of external condoms and inside of internal condoms
- ✓ to make using a condom more comfortable and fun
- ✓ to reduce the risk of a condom breaking, especially during anal sex
- ✓ inside and around the vagina or anus.



Stimulating (e.g. warming or tingly) and flavoured lubricants are available in some places.

Never use oil-based lubricants (e.g. massage oils or Vaseline) with latex condoms as the oil can break down the latex.



Why talk about condoms?

Talking about condoms isn't saying you don't trust your partner. It's about being in control of your health – and will make you more relaxed and able to just enjoy sex.



If your partner refuses to use a condom, don't feel pressured into having unprotected sex.

How to put on the external (male) condom

For condoms to be effective you need to use them correctly. It can help to make them a natural part of foreplay – a little creativity and a positive attitude are all it takes!

You might like to practice putting them on – you'll then be able to use them correctly when it really matters.

Always put the condom on before the penis touches a woman or man's genitals or mouth.

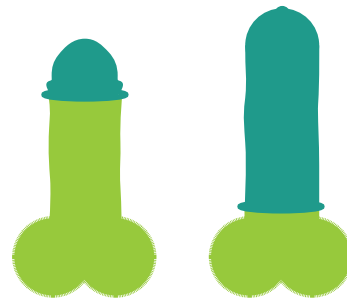
You'll find full instructions on the condom packet, but here are the basics:



1. Check the expiry date; don't use the condom if the date has passed.
2. Make sure the packet is in good condition and has a certification mark on it (FDA, CE, ISO or Kitemark).
3. Open it carefully – don't use scissors or sharp objects to open. If you rip the condom, don't use it.



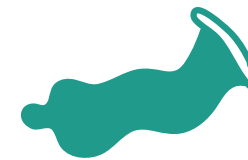
4. Place the condom on the top of the erect penis and pinch the teat at the end of the condom. This squeezes out any air bubbles and ensures there's space for the semen (cum).



5. Roll the condom down to the base of the penis; if it's on correctly this will be easy. If you've started putting it on the wrong way or you're not sure then take it off and try again.



6. You're ready to go!



7. After sex, withdraw the penis before it gets soft. To do this, hold the condom on at the base and gently take it off, wrap it in tissue and throw it in the bin (not down the toilet).
8. Even if the man hasn't ejaculated (cum) there can still be semen on his penis (pre-cum). So remove the condom carefully and throw it away.
9. Don't try to reuse condoms. Use a new one each time you have sex.

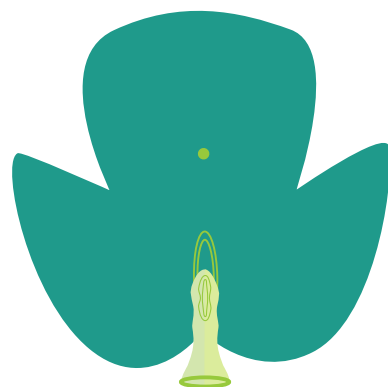
How to use an internal (female) condom

Internal condoms are an alternative to external condoms. Instead of going on the penis, they go inside the vagina.

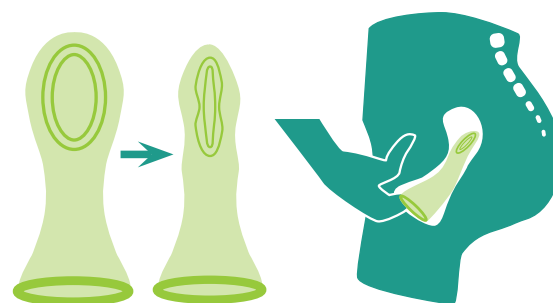
Some people prefer to use an internal condom as it means not having to rely on their partner to wear a condom. If you've never used an internal condom it's good to try one out! They are easy to use with a bit of practice.



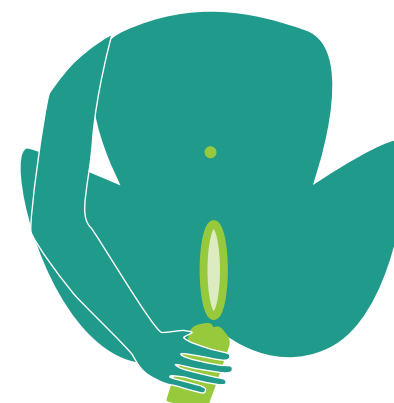
1. Check the expiry date on the packet, that it's in good condition and that it has a certification mark on it (FDA, CE, ISO, Kitemark).
2. Open it carefully – if you rip it, don't use it.



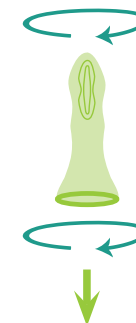
3. Sit, squat, lie or stand in a position you find comfortable, as if you're going to insert a tampon.



4. Squeeze the smaller ring at the closed end and insert it into your vagina as far as it will go. Make sure it doesn't twist. The large ring at the open end covers the area around the vaginal opening outside your body.
5. You're ready to go!



6. Make sure the penis inserts into the condom – it can be helpful to guide your partner into you.



7. After sex, twist the large ring to prevent semen from leaking out and gently pull the condom out and throw away.
8. Because the internal condom doesn't rely on an erection to stay in place you can take your time after ejaculation!
9. You can insert an internal condom ahead of time (up to 8 hours) – so you can be prepared and enjoy the moment.