Unsure about how to talk to your partner about using a condom? Or why it’s so important? Here are our top tips:

1. Condoms are one of the only ways to protect yourself from HIV and other STIs, they can also prevent unplanned pregnancy.

2. Condoms are very effective. They provide a physical barrier between the guy’s semen (cum) and the woman’s vagina. Female condoms are put inside the vagina before sex, while male condoms are put on the penis.

3. If you want to have sex but you’re unsure about how to use a condom then practise, practise, practise! Take a condom and a banana (or any other suitable object) and try putting on and rolling down the condom. That way you’ll feel confident and ready when the moment comes.

4. It can be easy to get carried away in the heat of the moment and not use a condom. Talking about it with your partner beforehand means you are both clear on what you want.

5. You may not know the person you’re planning on having sex with very well – you’ll get to know them better by talking about how to protect yourselves from HIV, other STIs and unplanned pregnancy.

6. If your partner pressures you into having sex without a condom or doesn’t agree to use one then it could be a sign that you’re with someone who isn’t taking care of themselves and doesn’t care enough about you.

7. Remember that you should never use a condom more than once, neither should you double up, as this creates friction and the condoms could break.

8. Condoms usually come pre-lubricated, but extra lubrication reduces HIV risk and feels good! If you’re using latex condoms, make sure you use a water-based lube as oil-based lubes can cause the condom to break.
Ideas for discussion

What do you think about having sex with and without a condom? You may not have thought about it much before, so here are some questions to think about yourself or discuss in your group.

1. What is the attitude of your friends, parents and wider community to condoms? Why do you think people talk about them positively or negatively?

2. Are there any traditions, attitudes, or practical reasons that prevent young people using condoms where you live?

3. What do you think are some of the reasons that men may not want to use a condom? And women?

4. What do you think are some of the risks of having sex without a condom? Are there any benefits?

5. When do you think young people are more likely to have sex without a condom?

6. Is it a good idea to carry condoms with you when you go out? Why? Why not?