

Condoms

The external condom is a thin, strong, latex (rubber) or polyurethane (plastic) sheath that is rolled onto the erect (stiff) penis before sexual activity to prevent unplanned pregnancy and protect from sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

How does it work?

Condoms act as a physical barrier preventing semen from going into the vagina, mouth or anus. Condoms are used to prevent pregnancy, but also lower the risk of passing on most sexually transmitted infections, such as chlamydia, gonorrhoea, HIV and Hepatitis B. The condom stops fluids (semen, vaginal secretions) from going between partners and the direct contact of genitals (private body parts) between partners, which will prevent most STIs.

How effective is it?

When used the right way, every single time you have sex, condoms can be 98% effective in preventing pregnancy. Because condoms can be used the wrong way or can break or slip off, in real life condoms might only be 88% effective in preventing pregnancy.

Where can I get condoms?

Condoms are quite cheap and can be bought from pharmacies, supermarkets, petrol stations and vending machines. They are also available from sexual health clinics, or your doctor might have some.

How to use a condom

- Check the expiry date before use.
- Carefully tear open the packaging, being sure not to rip the condom inside.

- Place the condom at the head of the erect penis – before any contact is made between the penis, vagina, or anus.
- Squeeze the tip of the condom between your thumb and forefinger to remove the air.
- Roll the condom all the way down the erect penis, as far as it will go.
- After ejaculation, withdraw the penis while it is still erect, holding the condom firmly in place at the base of the penis. The external condom can only be used once.
- Slide the condom off the penis, taking care not to spill any semen or to allow the penis to contact the vagina or anus.
- Throw the used condom in the bin. Don't flush it down the toilet.

Caring for your condoms

- Always use a new condom every time you have sex. Never re-use condoms.
- Always check the expiry date, which is on the packet. Never use condoms that have expired.
- Lubricants are products that can make sex more comfortable and enjoyable. Only use water-based lubricants such as KY jelly. Don't use oil-based lubricants such as petroleum jelly (Vaseline) or massage oil as these will damage the condom.
- Keep condoms in a cool, dark place and do not keep your condoms in the car or for a long time in a wallet, purse or handbag.

Other things you should know

Condoms come in different sizes, textures and colours. Latex sensitivity occurs in a small number of people, but non-latex condoms are available.

Most people will have condom accidents now and again but if you find this is happening a lot you might need another type of condom, or change your technique.

If a condom breaks or falls off, emergency contraception is available from pharmacies without a prescription.



Call 1300 003 707

Visit msiaustralia.org.au

Scan the QR code to read this information sheet online.

