
Contraception - condoms for men

Summary

- Using a condom can help avoid pregnancy.
 - Condoms must be used correctly, every time you have sex, to be effective.
 - Each condom should be used once only.
 - Use condoms with water or silicone-based lubricants (lubes), not oil-based lubes.
 - Condoms are also the most effective way to reduce your risk of contracting sexually transmissible infections (STI).
 - Use a condom even if you or your partner are on HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP).
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What are condoms

Condoms are an effective form of barrier contraception as they collect the man's semen, so it does not enter his partner's vagina. They are also the most effective way to reduce your risk of contracting a **sexually transmissible infection (STI)**.

Used properly, condoms prevent a person's body fluids (blood, semen or vaginal fluids) from entering their partner's body.

Many people report that the use of condoms enhances their sexual enjoyment. Reasons for this include:

- reduced risk of pregnancy (condoms are 95 to 99% effective)
- fewer concerns about acquiring sexually transmissible infections, including HIV
- improved quality and duration of an erection during sexual intercourse.

To avoid pregnancy, it is recommended to use them every time. Each condom is for one use only. Carry a spare condom in case you need a backup. If you're not confident using condoms, before you have sex, try practising putting them on until you feel more confident.

To avoid contracting an STI, for **safe sex**, use condoms every time you have sex with a casual or new sexual partner.

There are also condoms that are inserted into the vagina rather than put onto the penis. These are known as **female condoms**.

Choosing and storing condoms

Condoms come in different sizes, so choose the right size for you. Always use condoms that meet Australian and international standards.

Properly stored, condoms have a life of about 5 years. Always:

- Make sure the use-by date on the packet is current.
- Keep condoms in a cool, dry place as they can be damaged by heat.

Buy non-latex condoms if you or your partner are allergic to latex. Note that novelty condoms are not intended for pregnancy or STI prevention, and should not be used for penetrative sex.

Putting the condom on

When using a condom:

- Open the packet carefully, and avoid tearing the condom with your jewellery, teeth or fingernails.
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- Check which way the condom unrolls, but do not unroll it.
- Put the condom on the erect penis before it comes into contact with the vagina, mouth or anus. If you don't get the condom on properly the first time, throw it away and start again.
- Place the condom against the tip of the penis and gently unroll it down to the base of the penis.
- You can apply water-based lubricant to the inside of the tip of the condom and outside of the condom. Do not apply lubricant to the base of the inside of the condom as this may cause the condom to slip.

Condom troubleshooting

Possible problems include:

- the condom rolls up during sex – check the condom and roll it back to the base of the penis. It may help to use water-based lubricant
- the condom slides off during sex – pull out and use a new condom. Make sure you have the right condom fit
- the erection subsides during sex – withdraw the penis, holding on to the condom. If you are ready to have sex again, start with a new condom.

Preventing condom breakage

Check that your preferred brand of lubricant is water- or silicone-based, not oil-based. Both water- and silicone-based lubricants help to reduce friction, and so help prevent condom breakage. Water- and silicone-based lubricant should be used for all anal sex. The use of lubricant can also increase both your and your partner's sexual pleasure.

Avoid oil-based lubricants

Oil-based lubricants – for example, baby oil, massage oil and petroleum jelly (such as Vaseline) – can cause a condom to weaken and break. If a condom breaks during sex, your partner could be at risk of pregnancy or contracting an STI.

Condom breakage

If a condom breaks, you and your partner may need to speak to your GP or sexual health service about:

- emergency contraception (sometimes known as the 'morning after' pill) if condoms are your only form of contraception. Emergency contraception is available over the counter from most pharmacies
- if you have potentially been exposed to HIV, post-exposure prophylaxis for HIV (PEP) may be appropriate to reduce the risk of HIV transmission. The **PEP Information Line** (Tel. **1800 889 887**) will provide you with details about PEP. (Note: If your partner has HIV, but is on treatment and has very low levels of the virus in their body (also referred to as undetectable), then there is no risk of transmission and PEP is not necessary.)

Condom disposal

After using a condom during sex:

- Withdraw the penis immediately after ejaculation.
- Hold the rim of the condom to prevent spillage while withdrawing the penis.
- Slip the condom off carefully and put it in the bin.
- Do not flush the condom down the toilet.

Where to get help

- **Your GP (doctor)**
- Your school nurse or school welfare coordinator.
- Some secondary schools provide access to **an adolescent-health-trained GP on site**.
- Your local community health service
- **Family Planning Victoria's Action Centre** Tel. **1800 013 952** or **(03)9660 4700** (also is youth friendly)
- **Family Planning Victoria** Tel. **1800 013 952** or **(03) 9257 0100**
- **Melbourne Sexual Health Centre** Tel. **(03) 9341 6200** or **1800 032 017** or TTY (for the hearing impaired)

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(03) 9347 8619

- **The Centre Clinic**, St Kilda Tel. **(03) 9525 5866**
- **Equinox Gender Diverse Health Centre** Tel. **(03) 9416 2889**
- **Ballarat Community Health Sexual Health Clinic** Tel. **(03) 5338 4500**
- **Bendigo Community Health Sexual Health Clinic** Tel. **(03) 5434 4300** Or **(03) 5448 1600**
- **Gateway Health Clinic 35**, Wodonga Tel. **(02) 6022 8888** or **1800657 573**
- **Sunraysia Community Health Services** Tel. **(03) 5022 5444**
- **Barwon Health Sexual Health Clinic** Tel. **(03) 5226 7489**
- **Victorian Supercare Pharmacies**
- **1800MyOptions** Tel. **1800 696784** is a statewide phone service for information about sexual health as well as contraception and pregnancy options

This page has been produced in consultation with and approved by:

Melbourne Sexual Health Centre

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