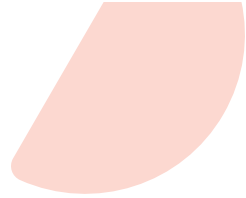




Contraception: Barrier Protection

Family
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What is barrier protection?

Barrier protection is a type of contraception which includes condoms. Condoms are the only form of contraception that protects you against sexually transmitted infections (STIs) as well as pregnancy. You have to use a new condom every time you have sex.

Condoms are most effective for preventing STIs that are transmitted through body fluids. These include chlamydia, gonorrhoea, hepatitis B and HIV. Condoms provide less protection against STIs that are transmitted through skin-to-skin touching (herpes and genital warts).

There are three main types of barrier protection, but when people talk about condoms they usually mean the external condom (male condom). There is also an internal condom, sometimes called the 'Female Condom'. The dental/rubber dam is a form of barrier protection, but it isn't a condom and won't protect you against unplanned or unwanted pregnancy.

Different types of barrier protection are better for different purposes:

- An external condom can be used on a penis or a sex toy, for oral, vaginal or anal sex.
- An internal condom can be used for vaginal or anal sex.
- A dam can be used for vaginal or anal oral sex (cunnilingus or anilingus).
- External condom (male condom)

External Condom

The external condom is a thin pouch which looks a bit like a water balloon.

Condoms are one of the most popular forms of contraception and they are available in different sizes, shapes, colours and textures.

Condoms are commonly made from latex. There are condoms made from polyurethane for people with a latex allergy or different materials for those with sensitive skin. A condom is placed over an erect (hard) penis or sex toy before having sex.

How does it work?

Like all types of condoms, external condoms work by putting a physical barrier between you and your partner. By putting a very thin specially-designed layer between you, it stops fluids mixing between you both. This makes it harder to pass on or catch an STI, or get pregnant.

Effectiveness


Used correctly every time, male condoms can be up to 98% effective at preventing unplanned pregnancy. Actual use is only 85% effective - that means that 15 per 100 women using condoms will become pregnant each year. If you are using condoms to prevent pregnancy, it's a good idea to also use another form of contraception.

If you use a new condom every time you have intercourse, and you follow the instructions for use, then a condom is very effective in reducing risk of STI transmission. But remember, barrier protection only protects the area it covers.

Benefits

Condoms are one of the easiest ways to protect yourself and your partner. They:

- are low cost
- are easy to use
- can be bought without a prescription

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- do not have an age limit
 - aren't affected by other medications (other than some vaginal medications - check with one of our doctors)
 - are hormone free
 - are easy to buy
 - can be carried around with you
 - are the only form of contraception to protect against unwanted pregnancy and STIs

Downsides

You should always trust your sexual partner, but one of the problems with condoms is that it can be hard to tell if someone is using one, unless you see or feel it for yourself.

All condoms can reduce sensitivity a little bit, so some people don't like using them. Remember though, safety is the most important thing and you have the right to insist on condom use during your sexual experiences.

Some other potential downsides are that condoms:


- can interrupt sex while you put it on
- can tear or come off during sex if not used properly
- can cause an allergic reaction or irritation in some people

How do you use one?

Always put condoms on an erect (hard) penis. Make sure there is no contact between you and your partner's genitals before the condom goes on, though. Pre-ejaculate (pre-cum) can contain sperm, and STIs are spread by skin-to-skin contact. If you want to be protected, it's important to put it on at the right time.

If you find that your penis goes soft when you have the condom on, just take it off and try again with a new condom once you have an erection again.

1. Check the use by date on your condom packet, and make sure it isn't damaged. You might want to do that regularly so that you don't have to stop for too long while you are having a good time
2. Never use your teeth or scissors or any other sharp object to remove the condom from its packet - you might put a hole in it
3. After carefully removing the condom from its packet, check that you are holding it the right way before putting it on. You can tell that it is the right way around, because the rim will be on the outside and it will look like a little hat. It will roll down easily if it is the right way around. If you get it wrong, throw it away and try again. Don't try to reuse it
4. Pinch the end of the condom - this leaves room for the ejaculate (cum)
5. If you want, you can squeeze a tiny bit of water based or silicone lubricant (lube) on the end of your penis before putting the condom on. Don't use anything oil based with condoms - oil wears away at the condom and can cause it to break
6. If you aren't circumcised, it might feel better to pull your foreskin back as much as is comfortable before putting on a condom
7. Put the condom on the tip of your penis, hold it in place around the end, and with your other hand roll it down the shaft until you reach the base of your penis
8. You can put more lube on the outside of the condom now if you like. You don't have to, but it means sex will feel better for both of you, and it will reduce the risk of the condom breaking

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9. If you are moving between vaginal and anal sex, you should change condoms in between
 10. If you are having sex with more than one person at a time, you should use a fresh condom for each person because STIs can transfer between them on your penis
 11. As soon as you have ejaculated, and before you lose your erection, hold the condom at the base of your penis and pull out of your partner and move away
 12. Push the condom off your penis, by holding the end of it so you don't spill. Tie it in a knot and throw it in the bin
 13. Wash your hands
 14. Use a fresh condom before your penis goes near your partner's genitals again

Where can you get them?

Great news - condoms are really easy to find. You can get them:

- at the supermarket
- at the pharmacy
- at some petrol stations
- online
- in some public toilets
- from Family Planning in Glenorchy, Launceston and Burnie. You can collect them from our waiting rooms, or
- Text 'Need Condoms' with your first name, surname, age and postal address to: [0488 492 443](tel:0488492443). Four condoms, lubricant and instructions will be mailed to you within a week.

Internal condom (condom for vaginas /female condom)

This is a far less popular type of condom, but it has lots of benefits.

How does it work?

Like all types of condoms, internal condoms work by putting a physical barrier between you and your partner. By putting a very thin specially designed layer between you, it stops fluids mixing between you both, and means your skin doesn't touch. This means it is much harder to pass on or catch an STI, or get pregnant.

Effectiveness

If you use the internal condom correctly every time, they can be very effective against the risk of unplanned pregnancy - around 95%. This is a little lower than the external condom. Actual use is only 79% effective - that means that 21 per 100 women using internal condoms will become pregnant each year. Again, this is less than the external condom.

If you are using any type of condom to prevent pregnancy, it's a good idea to also use another form of contraception.



Benefits

Internal condoms are an excellent way to protect yourself and your partner. They:

- can be bought without a prescription
- do not have an age limit
- aren't affected by other medications (other than some vaginal medications - check with one of our doctors)
- are hormone free
- can be carried around with you
- can be put in any time before sex
- are the only form of contraception to protect against unwanted pregnancy and STIs

Downsides

- The internal condom can be harder to find than the external condom
- It is more expensive than the external condom
- It can be tricky to use until you get the hang of it

How do you use one?

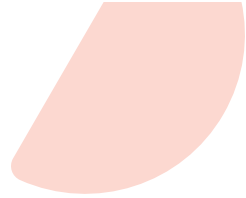
1. hold the inner ring (the closed end of the condom) and squeeze the edges of this ring together
2. put this end as far as possible into the vagina - when you let it go, the ring will open to hold the condom in place
3. with your fingers inside the condom, push it up into the vagina as far as you can

4. the outer ring should remain outside the vagina, resting against the labia
5. be sure that the condom is not twisted
6. guide the penis into the vagina during sex to make sure the condom stays in place. It's important the penis is inside the condom, not in between the condom and the vagina
7. after sex, twist the outer ring and pull the female condom out
8. wrap it in some tissue and put it in a rubbish bin

Where can you get them?

Internal condoms are available from Family Planning in Glenorchy, Launceston and Burnie. You can collect them from us or if you give us a call we can post some to you.

You can also find them online. Some pharmacies might have them, but you might need to ask someone for them. Don't be embarrassed - it's great that you are being safe!



Dental dam/rubber dam

How does it work?

The dental/rubber dam is a form of barrier protection, but it isn't a condom.

Like all types of barrier protection, dams work by putting a physical barrier between you and your partner. By putting a very thin specially designed layer between you, it stops fluids mixing between you both, and means your skin doesn't touch. This means it is much harder to pass on or catch an STI.

Effectiveness

If you use a new dental dam every time you have vaginal or anal oral sex, and you follow the instructions for use, then a dental dam is very effective in reducing risk of STI transmission. But remember, barrier protection only protects the area it covers.

Benefits

A dam is easy to use, and if used properly, it will reduce the risk of you catching or giving your partner an STI.

Downsides

They can only be used for oral sex, but aren't designed to be used on a penis, so their usefulness is limited and you may need to also use a condom, or another form of contraception.

- They aren't useful as a barrier during penetration.
- They can be hard to find.

How do you use one?

A dam is very easy to use:

1. Remove the dam from the packet carefully so you don't tear it
2. Place it over the vagina and vulva, or anus
3. Throw it in the bin when you are done. Don't flush it down the toilet, and don't reuse it

Where can you get them?

Dams are available from Family Planning in Glenorchy, Launceston and Burnie. You can collect them from us or if you give us a call we can post some to you.

You can also find them online. Some pharmacies might have them, but you might need to ask someone for them. Don't be embarrassed - it's great that you are being safe!

You can also make a dam by cutting the closed tip off a condom, and then cutting it up the side so you can open it up into a sheet of latex or polyurethane.



What if you forget to use a condom, or it breaks?

Condoms might break, leak, or not work if they are:

- used incorrectly
- used with an oil-based lube, or with no lube
- past their use by date
- used at the same time as some vaginal medications
- the wrong size for the penis
- torn or damaged
- kept in hot places for a long time (such as a car glove box in summer).

If you are using condoms correctly, it is extremely rare that they will break.

However, sometimes accidents happen. If the condom breaks or leaks, you or your partner may be at risk of catching an STI or getting pregnant.

If you or your partner are not using another form of contraception, and you want to avoid having a baby, you should use emergency contraception as soon as possible. You can get it at chemists or pharmacies. You don't need a script, but you might need to answer a few easy questions.

Some people call the emergency contraceptive pill 'the Morning After Pill'. It's important to know that even though it works best if you take it within 24 hours of having sex, it can still be used up to five days later. It shouldn't be used as regular contraception - only as a backup plan.

If you think that you might be pregnant, or suspect that you have an STI, you should make an appointment with one of our friendly doctors so they can help. For more information, support & advice visit www.fpt.org.au

What if I can't use a condom, or I don't want to?

If you have difficulty using condoms, talk to FPT or your doctor for advice.

If you are planning to have sex without a condom, have a sexual health check at FPT or your doctor to make sure that you and your partner are free from STIs, and you are aware of all of the other methods you could use to prevent unplanned pregnancy. This is important even if you are in a relationship where you only have sex with one another (monogamous relationship).



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