

Male condom

What are male condoms?

The male condom is a thin pouch of latex or polyurethane, which looks a bit like plastic. It is placed over an erect (stiff) penis or sex toy before having sex.

Condoms are the only form of contraception that protects you against sexually transmitted infections (STIs) as well as pregnancy. You have to use one every time you have sex.

Condoms are one of the most popular forms of contraception and they are available in different sizes, shapes, colours and textures. They are also available in different materials for those with allergies or sensitive skin.

How does the condom work?

The condom works by catching ejaculate (cum) as it is released and stopping it from entering the vagina or anus.

They also prevent partners from sharing other bodily fluids such as vaginal fluids and blood than transmit infection.

How do I use a condom?

Step 1 - Always check the expiry date before use. All condom packets have expiry dates on them.

Step 2 - Squeeze the tip of the condom to remove any air, then roll it down on the erect penis/ sex toy as far as it will go.

Step 3 - To avoid pregnancy and sexually transmissible infections, put the condom on before the penis touches the vagina or anus.

Step 4 - Once used, withdraw the penis before it softens and hold the condom against the base of the penis to ensure it does not slip off and to prevent any sperm from escaping.

Step 5 - Use one and then throw the condom into a bin (not down the toilet).

How effective is the condom?

If used correctly, condoms are 98% effective at preventing pregnancy. With typical use - given mistakes can happen like incorrect use or breakages - this can reduce to 88% effective.

You can increase your protection against unplanned pregnancy by combining condoms with another type of contraception such as the pill or the implant.



Using lubricant (lube) with condoms

You can use condoms with water or silicone-based lubricants (lube). Lube is a jelly or liquid-like material. Do not use oil-based lube or vaseline with condoms as it can cause them to break or slip off.

Where can I get condoms?

Condoms and lube are available for free from Family Planning Tasmania clinics. They are also available from supermarkets, pharmacies, chemists and petrol stations. There is no minimum age to buy condoms.

Advantages of condoms

- Protects against sexually transmitted infections (STIs).
- Low cost.
- Easy to use
- Little or no side effects.
- Can be bought without a prescription.
- Available in different sizes.
- Can be used on demand.
- Not affected by other medications.
- Hormone free.
- Can easily be carried with you.

Disadvantages of condoms

- Can interrupt sex while you put it on.
- Can tear or come off during sex if not used properly.
- Some people are allergic to latex condoms.
- Can occasionally lead to irritation of the vagina, penis or anus.

What can stop the condom from working?

Condoms might not work if they are:

- used incorrectly.
- used with an oil-based lubricant.
- past their use-by-date.
- used at the same time as certain vaginal medications.
- the wrong size for the penis.
- torn when opening the packet.
- kept in hot places for a long time (such as a car glove box in summer).

What do I do if I forget to use a condom or it breaks?

If you're not using another form of contraception, you may need emergency contraception (also known as the morning after pill) to prevent pregnancy.

Is it right for me?

Condoms might not be a good choice for you if you:

- Want closer to 100% effectiveness.
- Would like a contraceptive that regulates hormones.
- Have trouble asking your partner to use it.
- Have trouble remembering to use a new condom with each penetration..

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For more information, support and advice visit www.fpt.org.au

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