

CONDOMS AND FEMALE/INTERNAL CONDOMS

What are condoms and female/internal condoms?

Condoms and female/internal condoms are barriers. They

- prevent pregnancy by keeping sperm from entering the vagina and joining with an egg.
- reduce the risk of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV, by preventing contact with blood and sexual fluids and covering some skin. They can be used with vaginal, anal, and oral sex.

Condoms fit over a penis. They are made of latex, polyurethane, or animal tissue (lambskin). Of 100 women whose partners use condoms, about 15 will become pregnant in the first year of typical use. Some condoms are coated with spermicide.

Female/Internal condoms fit into the vagina. They also cover part of the vulva. They are made of polyurethane or another type of plastic called nitrile. Of 100 women who use female condoms, 21 will become pregnant in the first year.

Should I use spermicide with condoms?

Spermicides contain a chemical that kills sperm and this can help prevent pregnancy. They include gels, creams, film, foam, sponges, and suppositories that are inserted into the vagina. Some male condoms may contain spermicide.

Vaginal spermicides and condoms with spermicide are not recommended to prevent STIs. Nonoxonyl-9 is the active ingredient in most spermicides made in the US. Using it many times a day may irritate tissue in the vagina or anus. This can increase the risk of getting HIV or other STIs.

How do I use condoms?

Before putting on:

- Store condoms in a cool, dry place away from direct sunlight.
- Check the expiration date before using.
- Tear the condom package carefully – without using your teeth – to open.
- If the condom looks damaged, discolored, or brittle, do not use.
- Add a drop of lubricant inside the condom for extra pleasure, if you like.

To put on:

- Pull back the foreskin, unless circumcised, before rolling on the condom.
- Leave about a half-inch of space at the tip to collect semen.
- Pinch the air out of the tip with one hand while placing it on the penis.
- Unroll the condom over the penis with the other hand.
- Roll it all the way down to the base of the penis.
- Smooth out any air bubbles to prevent breaks.
- Lubricate the outside of the condom with water-based lubricant only, if you like.

To take off:

- Pull the penis out before it softens.
- Hold the condom against the base of the penis while you pull out.
- Throw the condom away in the trash.



How do I use female/internal condoms?

To insert: Vaginal Use

- Put lubricant on the outside of the closed end.
- Find a comfortable position, like standing with one foot on a chair, squatting, or sitting on the edge of a chair.
- Squeeze together the sides of the inside ring (at the closed end of the condom) and put into the vagina, like you would a tampon.
- Push the inner ring into the vagina as far as it can go.
- Pull out your finger and let the outer ring hang about an inch outside the vagina.

To insert: Anal Use

- Put lubricant on the outside of the closed end.
- Remove the inner ring.
- Find a comfortable position and insert the internal condom into your anus with your finger.
- After removing your finger, the outer ring should hang about an inch outside the anus.

To remove:

- Squeeze and twist the outer ring to keep semen inside the pouch.
- Gently pull it out of the vagina or anus, being careful not to spill any semen.
- Throw it away in the trash.

What else can I do to make condoms or female/internal condoms work better?

- Use them every time you have sex.
- Put it in place before the penis, or mouth, goes in or near the vagina, or anus.
- Use water-based lubricants with vaginal and anal sex. This may increase sensitivity and help prevent tears. Oils such as baby oil and Vaseline can make condoms and dams break.
- Use a condom or dam only once.
- Do not “double up” (use 2 condoms, or male and female condoms together) as this increases the risk of breakage.
- Read and follow the instructions that come with the condoms you use.

What should I do if the condom breaks or falls off?

Emergency contraception (EC) can reduce the risk of pregnancy when accidents happen. If the condom breaks or falls off during sex, consider taking EC. EC includes the insertion of a copper IUC (Cu IUC) and “morning after” pill(s). All work best when started as soon as possible, within 5 days of unprotected sex.

Let us know if you have any questions. We are happy to help you.

