



OFFICE OF POPULATION AFFAIRS

Male Condom THE FACTS



U.S. Department of Health & Human Services | 200 Independence Avenue, S.W. Washington, D.C., 20003

Male Condom THE FACTS



Quick Facts

Effectiveness in Preventing Pregnancy:

- Of 100 women whose partners use male condoms, about 18 may get pregnant. These numbers can be lower if male condoms are used correctly every time you have sex.

Use:

- Place on the erect penis before any sexual contact occurs.
- Use water-based lubricants (such as KY jelly) for comfort if desired.
- Pull out before the penis softens.
- Hold base of condom snugly against the penis when pulling out.
- Use condom once and then throw it away.

STI Protection:

Except for abstinence from any and all sexual contact, condoms are the best protection against sexually transmitted infections, including HIV.

- Yes (latex and polyurethane condoms only)
- No (lambskin condoms only)

Office Visit Required:

- No

What is the male condom?

A male condom is a thin film sheath that's placed over the penis. Condoms prevent pregnancy by keeping sperm from entering a woman's body.



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Condoms—sometimes called “rubbers”— made from latex rubber are the most common type. For people who get skin irritation from latex, polyurethane condoms are a good choice.

Condoms come either lubricated or non-lubricated. You can also add water-based lubricant, such as KY jelly, to a condom to make sex more comfortable. Avoid oil-based lubricants (e.g., petroleum jelly, massage oil, body lotion) as these weaken condoms and may cause them to break.

Used correctly each time you have sex, latex and polyurethane condoms do a good job of preventing pregnancy and many sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Condoms made from natural or lambskin materials also protect against pregnancy, but they won't protect against some STIs.

How do I use it?

- Put a condom on the erect penis before sex.
- To keep semen from spilling, pull the penis out before it gets soft.
- Hold the condom against the base of the penis when pulling out.
- Use the condom once and then throw it away.



Condoms can be damaged by heat, so store them somewhere cool and dry. Don't store them in a wallet or in a car.

[Click here](#) for more on how to use male condoms correctly.

How do I get male condoms?



You can buy condoms at many stores including pharmacies and grocery and discount stores. Health departments, clinics, and student health centers may offer free or low-cost condoms. You do not need a prescription or an ID to buy them.

To search for a family planning center near you, go to <http://www.hhs.gov/opa/>.



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How effective are they?

Of 100 couples each year whose partners use male condoms, about 18 women may get pregnant. Condoms are more effective at preventing pregnancy when they are used correctly and when you use them every time you have sex.

Advantages of the male condom

- You don't need a prescription.
- Anyone can buy them.
- Male condoms are safe and easy to use.
- They can be used for vaginal, anal, and oral sex. Ask for flavored condoms to improve the experience when using them for protection against STIs with oral sex.
- Latex and polyurethane condoms offer protection against STIs, including HIV, as well as pregnancy.



Drawbacks of the male condom

- You must use a new condom each time you have sex.
- Condoms made from latex can cause irritation or allergic reactions in some people.
- A male partner has to agree to use male condoms.



Sources

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

- [Unintended Pregnancy Prevention: Contraception](#)
- [Condom Fact Sheet in Brief](#)



Male Condom THE FACTS



Food and Drug Administration

- [Birth Control: Medicines to Help You](#)

Office on Women's Health

- [Girlshealth.gov: Types of Birth Control](#)
- [Birth Control Methods Fact Sheet](#)

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