

# Sexual Health

## MALE CONDOM



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A male condom is a soft disposable sheath made from latex or polyurethane (non-latex). It fits over the erect penis to prevent the exchange of body fluids. It can be used for vaginal, anal or oral sex. It is 85-98% effective in preventing pregnancy. Use of a male condom reduces but does not eliminate the risk of sexually transmitted infections (STI) and HIV transmission.

### *How does it work?*

- Acts as a physical barrier preventing direct contact between the penis and the vagina, anus or mouth.
- For pregnancy prevention it traps the sperm in the condom so it cannot fertilize the egg.

### *Advantages*

- Available without a prescription.
- Inexpensive.
- No hormones.
- Available in different shapes, sizes, colours, and flavours.
- Latex and polyurethane condoms help protect against some sexually transmitted infections.
- Lubrication enhances the experience and reduces skin friction, which reduces the risk of transmission of infection or disease.
- Shared responsibility for birth control and infection prevention.
- Both partners can participate in their use, condoms can be fun.
- May help the person wearing the condom avoid premature ejaculation.

### *Disadvantages*

- Must be available at the time of intercourse.
- Must be stored in a place that is not too hot or too cold (glove compartments and wallets are not good storage).
- Requires high motivation to use consistently and correctly.
- May slip or break during sexual activity.
- They expire.
- May reduce sensitivity for either partner.
- Lambskin condoms and condoms labelled for novelty use are not recommended because of higher risk of failure.

### *How to use a condom*

- Check expiry date.
- It is important to keep the condom on from start to finish of any sexual activity which includes penetration.
- It can be awkward to put on a condom, so practice and experiment without a partner to get the hang of it and feel confident when the time comes to use it.
- Pinch the tip of the condom to create a space to collect semen and roll the condom down the entire shaft of the penis. If uncircumcised, pull back the foreskin.
- There are many kinds of lubricants (lube). Choose a water based-lube. The more slippery the condom the less likely it is to break or come off during sex.
- Do not use any oil base lubricants (petroleum jelly or baby oil).
- Soon after ejaculation (cumming) hold the condom at the base so it won't slip off and pull out holding onto the base of the penis and the condom.
- Throw the condom in the garbage, not the toilet.
- Remember to use a new condom if switching from one sex act to another (i.e. from oral to vaginal or anal sex) regardless of ejaculation.
- Never reuse a condom.

### *Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) Protection*

Use of a male condom reduces but does not eliminate the risk of STIs and HIV transmission.

Adapted with permission from the Middlesex London Health Unit.