

Male Condoms



The condom is a contraceptive method for men that is used to prevent pregnancy and also sexually transmitted infections including HIV. A condom is a thin rubber sheath that is worn over the penis during sexual intercourse. Condoms are usually made of latex rubber and are available in several sizes and colours. Some condoms also come with lubricant substances or spermicidal medication (that destroy sperms) applied on them.

Condoms remain one of the most preferred contraceptive methods used by couples to either delay their first pregnancy or space between two pregnancies. Couples using other contraceptive methods like male or female sterilization, Copper T, can use condoms in addition to these methods to protect themselves from sexually transmitted infections.

Consistent and correct use of condoms during every intercourse can help protect against the transmission of sexually transmitted infections including HIV/AIDS. It is important to note that not using a condom even once can lead to transmission of infections.

How does it work?

- The condom acts as a barrier and prevents the entry of sperms into the vagina, thus preventing conception.
- The condom also acts as a barrier for transmission of infectious disease agents during sex that may cause sexually transmitted infections such as HIV/AIDS.

How to use?

- A condom should be worn before the penis touches the woman's genital area and should be worn throughout the duration of the sexual act.
- Tap the corner of the condom pack with your fingers and open the pack from the top corner carefully. Pull out the condom that is kept rolled inside the pack taking care that the condom does not get torn or scratched. Do not unroll the condom while taking it out from the pack.
- Check for any tears in the condom. Before applying the condom on the penis, pinch the tip of the condom and ensure that there is some space left at the tip of the condom for the semen to collect after ejaculation. Place the condom at the tip of the erect penis with the rolled rim facing outward and slowly unroll it over the penis as shown in the figure above. The condom should cover the penis. Take care that your finger nails do not damage the condom.
- After sexual intercourse, hold the rim of the condom carefully and withdraw the penis from the vagina before the erect penis comes back to its normal soft state. Ensure that there is no spillage of semen inside or outside the vagina while withdrawing the penis.
- Each condom can only be used once and should not be reused. A new condom should be used for every single act of sex.



Advantages

Condoms are inexpensive and easily and widely available. They are simple and easy to use without involvement of any medical technology or need for medical investigations or advice. They do not cause any side effects or medical problems. They can be used by people of any age and for several years for contraception. By removing the fear of pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections, condoms increase sexual pleasure. One can also discontinue the use of condoms at any time without the need for medical advice.

Transmission of sexually transmitted infections like HIV/AIDS is prevented when condoms are consistently and correctly used. Although the HIV virus is very tiny, it cannot cross the rubber sheath of the condom. Condoms are thus an excellent method for preventing transmission of sexually transmitted infections.

In India, condoms are available widely. We are familiar with the brand name Nirodh. This is a condom brand manufactured and distributed by the Government of India. There are other condoms brands available such as Kamasutra, Pink, Kohinoor, Adam, Moods. These are sold at inexpensive rates and are available through medical shops, pan/cigarette shops, street corner shops, provision stores and also through online sales. Condoms are also available free of cost at government hospitals, primary health centres and through some non-governmental organizations (NGOs). ANMs and ASHAs also distribute condoms during their field visits to those who need them.

Frequently asked questions about condoms

1. Many people believe that condoms reduce sexual pleasure.

This is incorrect, especially the modern-day condoms that are made of very thin yet durable latex sheath. The reassurance that one is protected from pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections when using a condom removes fears and increases sexual pleasure.

2. Another common fear is that condoms tear frequently.

- Condoms do not usually tear when one learns to use them correctly.
- Condoms may tear when used beyond their expiry dates.
- If the woman is not ready for sex or is coerced into having sex, the vagina could be dry, and this may lead to tearing of the condom.
- If oil or oily substances are used over the condom for lubrication during sex, the condom could tear. Therefore, such substances should not be used when using a condom.
- There are chances of the condom tearing if they are accidentally scratched by fingernails when being worn over the penis.
- If one discovers that the condom has been torn during intercourse, emergency contraceptive methods must be used within 72 hours of intercourse to prevent pregnancy.

Condoms are used by many people worldwide. For example, it is one of the most widely used contraceptive methods in Japan.

Condoms are the only contraceptive method that prevent the transmission of sexually transmitted infections. Condoms provide the dual benefit of protection from pregnancy as well as from sexually transmitted infections.



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