

Whole Woman's Health of Austin
Transforming Healthcare One Woman at a Time
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Condoms

Condoms provide the best form of protection against sexually transmitted diseases and HIV. If used with a spermicide (jelly, cream, film or suppository) they also provide excellent protection against pregnancy. To obtain these benefits, however, you must choose good-quality condoms and use them correctly. In some cases, you may have to overcome your partner's reluctance.

How to Choose Condoms:

Condoms are usually made from thin latex, polyurethane, or lambskin. The Food and Drug Administration stresses that latex and polyurethane condoms are more reliable than natural or lambskin condoms at preventing STD's and HIV. Avoid foreign-brand condoms as they are not subject to the strict quality-control standards the FDA imposes on American brands.

How to Keep Condoms Functional:

- In an unopened box, most condoms last about a year. It is generally most reliable to purchase them in a store, not from a machine. To prevent them from deteriorating prematurely, keep them in a place where they won't be chafed or subjected to heat. They may deteriorate quickly in a pocket, wallet, or glove compartment, and check the expiration date.
- It is important to purchase lubricated condoms, and best if they're lubricated with Nonoxynol-9. Condoms that come lubricated in their packages are less likely to break from dryness. Nonoxynol-9 is a spermicide that not only kill off some of the sperm if the condom breaks, but is also credited with decreasing the risk of transmitting venereal diseases and HIV/AIDS. For do-it-yourself lubrication – and added protection-coat a non-lubricated condom with jelly or cream.
- Inspect a condom for tears or holes before using it. But don't pull on it or blow it up. Needless stretching or inflating may damage it. If you have any doubt about the safety of the condom, throw it away.

How to Put on and Remove a Male Condom:

Fit the condom over the erect penis. Gently pinch the tip of the condom to allow room get out any air bubbles and at the tip for semen to move into after ejaculation. Roll the condom down to cover the shaft of the penis. Avoid tearing the condom with your fingernails or even cause small holes that may allow sperm through. After ejaculation, pull the penis out of the mouth, vagina, or anus before it becomes soft. While doing so, hold the base of the condom against the penis so it doesn't slip off. The wearer should move away from his partner before he removes the condom, since semen will now be on his penis. If there is any chance that semen has leaked from the condom, the wearer's partner should apply spermicide right away.

How to Use a Female Condom:

To insert, the woman can either be lying down, squatting, or standing up with one foot propped on a chair or toilet- or positioned much as she would to insert a tampon. The condom will have a large rubbery ring located at the bottom, and a small ring at the top of the condom. Squeeze the small, top ring so it's long and oval-shaped. Use a finger to insert the top of the ring into the vagina, pushing up and back until the top ring holds in place across the top of the vagina and beneath the cervix (the end of your uterus which feels like the end of your nose). Remove your finger, and place the lower ring outside the vagina to cover the vulva. When having intercourse, make sure the penis is inserted inside the condom's "tube". After intercourse, hold the outer ring against the vulva when the penis is withdrawn to ensure that the condom does not slip put with it. Twist the outer ring to pinch off the condom, and pull out the condom.