

# Facts About **Condoms ("Rubbers")**

## **What are condoms?**

The male condom, or "rubber," is a thin covering made of latex, plastic (polyurethane) or animal membrane ("natural"/lambskin) that is rolled over an erect penis before oral, anal or vaginal sex begins.

## **How do condoms work and how well do they work?**

The male condom acts as a physical barrier to stop sperm from getting into the vagina, mouth or anus and protects against sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

Latex condoms are the most effective at preventing sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Natural or lambskin condoms protect against bacterial STIs not viral STIs or human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

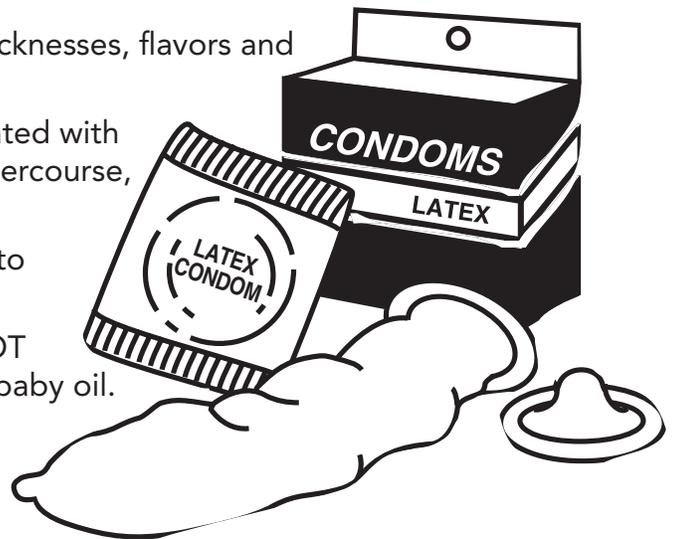
Condoms containing spermicide (chemical that kills sperm) may increase the risk of STIs by irritating the vagina and penis.

If used correctly each time you have sex, the condom will keep you from getting pregnant about 71-88% of the time.

## **Types of Male Condoms:**

Male condoms are available in different sizes, shapes, thicknesses, flavors and colors. They can be lubricated or unlubricated.

- Spermicide (nonoxynol-9) – These condoms are lubricated with a chemical that kills sperm. These are ok for vaginal intercourse, but not recommended for oral or anal sex.
- Spermicide Free – Women and men who are sensitive to spermicide can use spermicide-free condoms.
- Latex – These are the most common condoms. **DO NOT USE** with an oil-based lubricant like petroleum jelly or baby oil. The condom may break or slip off if you do.
- Non-Latex – If you are allergic to latex, this condom is for you. It is usually made from polyurethane, other synthetic high tech materials, or natural lambskin.

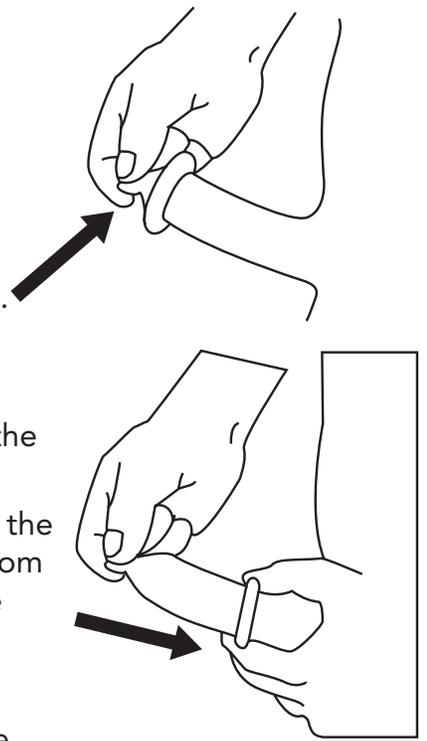


## **Where can I get condoms?**

Condoms are free at health departments. You can buy them at drugstores, grocery stores and online. They are also sold in some vending machines in public restrooms.

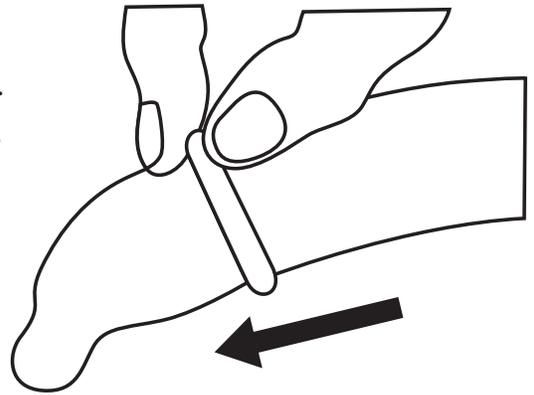
## **How do you use a male condom?**

- Before you use a condom, check the date on the package. An old or outdated condom breaks easier.
- Put the condom on your partner before his penis gets near your vagina. The fluid (pre-cum) that leaks from a guy's penis before he ejaculates can contain sperm.
- A new condom must be used each time you have oral, anal or vaginal sex.
- Be careful not to tear the condom when you are unwrapping it. If it is torn, brittle, or stiff, throw it away and use another one.
- If your partner is not circumcised, pull back his foreskin before rolling on the condom.
- The condom is rolled over the erect penis before sexual activity begins. If the condom does not have a built-in nipple, leave about 1/2-inch of the condom free at the tip of the penis so that semen has a place to collect. Unroll the condom over the penis as far as it will go.
- Smooth out any air bubbles – they can cause the condom to break.
- If the condom feels too dry to put inside you, add lubricant as needed. Be sure to use only water-based lubricants, such as K-Y® jelly. Oil-based lubricants, such as petroleum jelly, massage oils and body lotions can cause condoms to break, leak or slip off.



## **How to take a condom off:**

- After your partner ejaculates, be sure he pulls out before he is soft.
- One of you should hold on to the rim of the condom while he pulls out so the semen does not spill out.
- Throw the condom in the trash. If you decide to have sex again, you must use a new condom.
- Your partner should wash his hands and genitals (sex organs) with soap and water thoroughly after sex to remove any semen (sperm) before getting near your vulva (sex organs) again.



## **REMEMBER:**

- Other than abstinence, condoms give the best protection against sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) you can get when you have oral, anal or vaginal sex. Use a latex condom to protect yourself. You can still be at risk for herpes (HSV) or the human papillomavirus (HPV) from areas not covered by a condom.
- Keep condoms in a dry, dark place at room temperature. Extreme heat or cold can weaken the condom. Do not store condoms in your wallet for a long time or put them in your car glove compartment. Keep condoms out of direct sunlight.
- If the condom breaks or semen spills or leaks out, you and your partner should wash any place your sex organs touched right away. Do not douche. Take Emergency Contraception (EC) right away. You can get EC at the pharmacy without a prescription or at the county health department family planning clinic or doctor's office.