



**YOUR
HEALTH.
YOUR
CHOICE.**

Condoms

Talk to your partner about birth control before you have sex. You can use latex condoms to lower your chances of getting sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and prevent an unwanted pregnancy.

What is a condom?

A condom is form of birth control. You can use it with your partner(s) to try not to get pregnant. A condom also helps protect you from some sexually transmitted infections (STIs). It is a thin covering, usually made of latex rubber.

A man wears it over his erect penis. A female condom is inserted into a woman's vagina. Condoms used consistently and correctly provide protection against pregnancy and/or getting or spreading an STI, such as chlamydia, gonorrhea, hepatitis B and HIV (the virus that causes AIDS).

How does a condom work?

A condom acts as a barrier or wall to keep blood, semen or vaginal fluids from passing from one person to another. See the condom package insert on how to use a condom. It is used once and then thrown away.

A male or a female condom without spermicide can provide protection against catching an STI during oral sex. In this case the male condom can be used to cover the penis and either type of condom cut lengthwise can be used to cover the genital area.

What should I consider when using condoms?

Always check the expiry date of condoms

Check to ensure that there is still air in the condom package, if there isn't it could mean that the condom has a hole in it.

Condoms are made of different materials, sizes, shapes, colours and textures.

They come in dry or lubricated form, with or without spermicidal jelly (Spermicide contains nonoxynol-9. With frequent use, nonoxynol-9 can irritate the vagina and anus which increases the risk of getting a sexually transmitted infection, including HIV). You may need to try several kinds of condoms until you find those that are best for you. There are a variety of different kinds of condoms including, latex, polyurethane, novelty condoms etc. Please see a House clinician or volunteer to discuss the uses of each kind.

Condoms should be stored at room temperature away from sunlight. You can use a water-based lubricant with condoms, however condoms made of latex should NOT be used with oil based products such as petroleum jelly, baby oil, vegetable oil or hand cream.

It is important to use condoms or a latex barrier with sexual partners to decrease the risk of getting a sexually transmitted infection.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of condoms?

Advantages

- ★ Easy to get and FREE at PPT Health Services and other sexual health clinics.
- ★ Discreet to carry.
- ★ Condoms protect from unplanned pregnancy.
- ★ Condoms protect from sexually transmitted infections and HIV.
- ★ Easy to use.
- ★ Male and female condoms available.
- ★ Men gain greater ejaculatory control.

Disadvantages

- ★ Female condoms are more expensive.
- ★ You need to stop to use a condom.

Where can you get condoms?

Condoms are free at PPT Health Services and other birth control clinics. Condoms are also available from vending machines in some public washrooms, drug stores, supermarkets, and convenient stores, on-line and in condom shops without a prescription.

If you need further information or would like to book an appointment, call:

Planned Parenthood Toronto Health Services for youth ages 13 to 29. 416-927-7171. Health Services offers same-day, scheduled and drop-in appointments. For more information visit www.ppt.on.ca.

Women's Programming at the Bay Centre for Birth Control for women of all ages at 416-351-3700.

Youth can also access information about sexual health by calling the Teen Sex InfoLine at 416-961-3200 or chat live using MSN messenger at spiderbytes@hotmail.com from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. Monday to Wednesday and 12 noon to 6 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. You can also email us a question anytime at askus@spiderbytes.ca or visit www.spiderbytes.ca.