

CONTRACEPTION—MALE CONDOM



BASIC INFORMATION

DESCRIPTION

- The goal of contraception (or birth control) is to prevent an unplanned pregnancy. The majority of methods of contraception enable sexually active couples to temporarily avoid pregnancy. Permanent birth control is accomplished through sterilization. Be sure you know and understand the different types of birth control available to you, the risks and benefits of each, and any side effects, so that you can make an informed choice.
- The condom is a contraceptive device that looks like a skinny balloon and is usually made of thin latex rubber, polyurethane or natural membranes. The male wears this sheath over the erect penis during intercourse to prevent the sperm from being deposited in the vagina. The condom may also be effective in preventing spread of some sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). It is the only form of temporary birth control a man can use. Some condoms are made of animal intestine, but these are not effective for preventing STDs.

ADVANTAGES

- Is generally effective for contraceptive use (88-98%). Proper and consistent usage increases the effectiveness.
- The condom is readily available, inexpensive and easy to use. Women can buy and carry condoms.
- No medical appointment or prescription is required to purchase condoms.
- In addition to birth control, it gives good protection against some STDs including HIV.
- It helps partners from reinfecting one another with an STD, such as trichomoniasis, during the treatment period.
- There are no systemic side effects from condom use.
- Since the condom catches the semen, a woman has less leaking (discharge) following intercourse.

DISADVANTAGES

- Since the condom needs to be used right at the time of sexual intercourse, it may decrease the spontaneity of sex for some couples.
- Condoms may lessen the male's sensation since the penis does not touch the vaginal walls directly.
- The friction caused by using a condom may irritate a woman's vagina unless a lubricant is used.
- Condoms can deteriorate if exposed to heat. Do not store them for very long in a pocket or wallet. If not exposed to heat, condoms have a shelf life of about 5 years.
- Allergic reaction to latex (rare).
- Some condoms contain a spermicide called nonoxynol-9. Recent studies show that nonoxynol-9 does not help prevent HIV or STD transmission, and with very frequent use, may cause genital irritation for a woman and possibly increase the risk of STD transmission. Occasional use should not cause concerns.



GENERAL MEASURES

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE

- When opening a condom, handle the package gently. Don't use teeth, sharp fingernails, scissors, or other sharp instruments as these may damage the condom. And make sure you can see what you're doing!
- After you open the package, inspect the condom. If the material sticks to itself or is gummy, the condom is not good. Check the condom top for other obvious damage such as brittleness, tears and holes, but don't unroll the condom to check it because this could damage it.
- Use a new condom for every act of intercourse and oral sex.
- Put the condom on after the penis is erect and before any contact is made between the penis and any part of the partner's body.
- If using a spermicide, put some inside the condom tip.
- If the condom does not have a reservoir tip, pinch the tip enough to leave a half-inch space for semen to collect. Make sure to eliminate any air in the tip to help keep the condom from breaking.
- Holding the condom by the rim (and pinching the half-inch tip, if necessary) place the condom on top of the penis. Then, continuing to hold it by the rim, unroll it all the way to the base of the penis. If you are using water-based lubricant, you may put more on the outside of the condom.
- If you feel the condom break, stop immediately, withdraw and put on a new condom.
- After ejaculation and before the penis gets soft, grip the rim of the condom and carefully withdraw.
- To remove the condom, gently pull it off the penis, being careful the semen doesn't spill out.
- Wrap the used condom in a tissue and throw it in the trash. Because condoms may cause problems in sewers, don't flush them down the toilet. Afterwards, wash your hands with soap and water.
- For more information, check your library or the internet.

MEDICATIONS

No restrictions.



NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF

You are interested in using condoms for contraception and want additional information.