

## *Woman's Health Options*

### *Condoms (Male)*

#### *What is a Condom?*

A condom is a sheath made of latex, synthetic rubber, animal material (lamb skin) or polyurethane (a kind of plastic) that fits over an erect penis.

Condoms come in different sizes, shapes and thickness. Many condoms are lubricated and some come with spermicides; spermicide is a special chemical that kills sperm.

#### *Does it Work?*

With perfect use 3 women out of 100 will become pregnant. Condoms are effective if they are used consistently and correctly every time you have sexual intercourse.

**With typical use 14 women out of 100 will become pregnant.** Typical use refers to the fact that many couples do not consistently and/or correctly use a condom.

Condoms also provide the best protection against sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV/AIDS during vaginal, anal or oral sex.

#### *How is it Used?*

The man puts the condom on his penis as soon as it is erect, before the penis is near the vagina. The condom holds the semen so that it does not pass into the woman's vagina, anus or mouth. After sex, the man carefully takes off the condom so that it does not leak. Each condom can be used only once. Although we often assume that all men know how to use a condom, **incorrect use is common and is a major cause of condom failure.**

#### *Condom Instructions:*

- Use a new condom every time you have sexual intercourse.
- You or your partner should put the condom on the penis as soon as the penis is erect, *before* the penis is near the vagina or anus.
- Place the unrolled condom on the tip of the penis. Hold the tip of the condom when putting it on so that it does not fill with air and burst. Leave about one-half inch of empty space at the tip. Roll the condom all the way to the base of the penis. If the condom is initially placed on the penis backwards, do not turn it around. Throw it away and start with a new one because it could have sperm on it.
- After intercourse, hold the condom at the base of the penis and remove the penis, along with the condom, from the vagina or anus, taking care not to spill semen near the opening. If your partner loses his erection, the condom may slip off.
- Discard the used condom in a wastebasket. Do not use it again.

#### *Other instructions and cautions:*

- Some couples lubricate the outside of the condom to make it easier for the penis to enter the vagina. If you choose to lubricate a latex condom, **do not use oil-based lubricants** (such as petroleum jelly or hand lotion). Oil-based lubricants can cause the condom to tear. You can use contraceptive foam or jelly, saliva, or water-based lubricants.
- Try not to carry condoms near your body. Body heat can damage the rubber.
- Store condoms in a cool, dry, dark place and always check the expiry date.

***Do not use a condom if:***

- The package is broken.
- The condom is brittle or dried out.
- The color is uneven or has changed.
- The condom is unusually sticky.

***What are the Advantages?***

- Condoms give the greatest protection against sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/ AIDS.
- Condoms let men and women share the responsibility for birth control. Both partners can buy and carry condoms.
- Condoms are easy to get. You can buy condoms in drugstores or grocery stores.
- Condoms offer extra protection when used with other birth control methods.

***Things to Think About:***

- You have to be very motivated to use condoms every time you have sex.
- You have to stop to put on the condom before intercourse.
- A condom might dull sensation for either partner. You can help this by using an extra water-based lubricant inside and outside the condom.
- A few people are allergic to latex (2-4 %); polyurethane condoms are a new alternative for these people.
- Nonoxynol-9 is a kind of spermicide on many condoms. Recent evidence shows that Nonoxynol-9 increases the risks for STIs and HIV due to irritation in the vagina and the tip of the penis.
- Improper use is the major cause of condom failure. Make sure you use a condom properly each and every time.
- There are a lot of novelty condoms on the market that are not as effective in protecting against pregnancy or STIs. The safest place to buy a condom is at a pharmacy.

***For More Information Call:***

The Birth Control Centre	735-0010
Options Sexual Health Association	423-3737
Woman's Health Options	484-1124
STD Clinic	413-5156

Canadian Women's Health Network	<a href="http://www.cwhn.ca">www.cwhn.ca</a>
Obstetricians and Gynecologists of Canada	<a href="http://www.sexualityandu.ca">www.sexualityandu.ca</a>