

## **Your guide to safer sex and the condom / Family Planning Information Service.**

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### **Publication/Creation**

London : Family Planning Information Service, 1988.

### **Persistent URL**

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/he9khqjw>

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This "A-Z of condom use" may seem very offputting and mechanical. But even if you haven't used a condom before, you'll probably find it much easier than you thought. You may even be surprised how little fumbling or interruption to lovemaking is involved.

## WHERE TO GET SUPPLIES

This is a matter of personal choice.

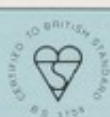
■ Condoms have come out from behind the counter. They're now such a part of everyday life that you can buy them from chemists, garages, record shops, supermarkets, barbers, some clothes shops, pubs, slot machines and by mail order. Many shops have self-service so you don't have to ask, and many are making condoms as easy to buy as records, toothpaste or petrol.

■ If you want free supplies and advice about sex and contraception, you can go to a family planning clinic or Brook Advisory Centre. Men and women are welcome. Details: Family Planning Information Service (FPIS), 27-35 Mortimer Street, London W1N 7RJ; 01-636 7866.

■ Family doctors (GPs) do not prescribe condoms.

### TO BE SURE...

Always look for the BSI Kitemark as this means the condoms are properly tested



*Make safer sex  
a habit*

## AIDS

AIDS and AIDS related conditions are caused by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) which attacks the body's defence system, making it less able to fight disease and infection.

People infected with the virus can feel quite fit and well, and so not know that they could infect others. This is because there's often a long waiting period between the time of infection and the time when any symptoms begin to show.

HIV can be passed on from the blood, semen or genital fluids of an infected person. Used properly, condoms help prevent this happening during sex.

### Remember...

■ A drop of semen may contain millions of sperm and could cause a pregnancy *and* carry infection.

■ If you're having a cuddle after lovemaking, there could be semen on the penis from the earlier climax. So you can still pass on infection or risk of pregnancy if there is genital contact. Condoms are a valuable part of your safer sex plan. And so is using a reliable method of contraception if there's a risk of pregnancy.

■ If the condom breaks, see your doctor or clinic as soon as convenient and certainly within 3 days to ask about emergency contraception. If you're worried about infection, get medical advice.

## Help yourself to sexual health

■ Ask your GP, family planning clinic, Brook Advisory Centre, pharmacist, well-woman or well-man clinic or sexually transmitted disease clinic for more advice, or phone the National AIDS Helpline: 0800 567 123 (calls are free).

■ Send for the booklet *Guide to a healthy sex life*, free from PO Box 777, London SE99 6YE. Free leaflets on all contraceptive methods are available from FPIS, 27-35 Mortimer Street, London W1N 7RJ.

Printed by The Paper Press Ltd, Croydon  
Designed by Thomson Design Services  
Condom/1/88  
Telephone: 01-636 7866  
27-35 Mortimer Street, London W1N 7RJ  
and the HEA  
Information Service supported jointly by the FPIS and the HEA

FAMILY PLANNING ASSOCIATION AUTHORITY  
HEALTH EDUCATION AUTHORITY



- ◆ **Don't have sex without a condom to please your partner**  
Value your health even if your partner doesn't.
- ◆ **Do take the initiative**  
Carry your own condoms. Don't rely on the other person. Better for both of you to be prepared than neither.
- ◆ **Do put sexual health first**  
Your first priority is protecting one another's health. This needn't interfere with sexual enjoyment.
- ◆ **Practice makes perfect**  
If you haven't used a condom before, try handling one or practising on your own.

## YOUR GUIDE TO SAFER SEX AND THE CONDOM



*Old fashioned...  
Messy...  
Embarrassing...*

# WHY BOTHER WITH CONDOMS?

## CONDOMS MAKE SEX SAFER

Condoms help make sex safer. Notice we've said safer — not safe. Like most things, sex is not risk-free and never has been.

Added to the age-old risks of unplanned pregnancy and infections, the disease that's causing the most worry now is AIDS. With no cure and no vaccine, we all need to be extra careful. We needn't give up our sex lives but we may need to change them, and to think extra carefully about whether or not to start a new sexual relationship.

Safer sex is healthier sex. Using condoms to protect one another is an important part of safer sex.

Condoms



# SOME PEOPLE SAY...

Some people feel condoms lack romance and sex-appeal. Non-users complain most! For example:



*"They're passion killers. Just when you want to go on you have to stop and fumble around."*

Good sex isn't a non-stop race. Why not take your time. Try to treat putting on a condom as part of lovemaking so it's not an interruption. One lover can do it for the other — it can be fun. If you get the giggles, so what? With practice, putting on a condom can become really easy.



*"You can't always trust a man. I like to be in charge of my own protection."*

If you can't trust someone, why have sex with them, condom or no condom?



*"It's like having a bath with wellies on: I can't see the point of having sex with a bit of rubber in between."*

Well, condoms used to be really tough and thick. But today's condoms, while incredibly strong, are so fine you lose little, if any, sensation. And that protective rubber could be all there is between you and AIDS.



*"If I carried a condom, he'd call me a slag."*

Here's the old sexual double standard. If a woman carries a condom, she's fast; if she doesn't, she's foolish. AIDS is changing all that. Now, people are realising it's perfectly OK for a woman to carry condoms. At least one person is being sensible. And you know you're not a slag.



*"It makes sex look preplanned."*

This can seem like a problem, especially if you don't want to appear too keen for sex. But it's better to be safe than sorry.

## How can condoms help?

Used properly, condoms can help protect against pregnancy AND many sexually transmitted infections (including the HIV virus which causes AIDS). Condoms may even protect against cancer of the cervix (neck of the womb). It makes sense to use them.

### But what about the bother...?

What about the bother, the possible embarrassment of

condoms — buying them, carrying them, talking about them, using them and disposing of them?

Well — they're not beautiful and using them may seem difficult. But whatever you've heard, or whatever you think, it is worth bothering. Condoms really aren't that bad, that messy or that difficult to use. And nowadays, with AIDS, they make sense for you and your partner.

## TALKING IT THROUGH

Most people know the health risks of sex and have some idea of what's safe and what's not. But raising the subject of safer sex with someone you're going to make love with can be a problem. It may be easier with someone you know well than it is with someone you've just met. But nowadays it is really wise to have sex with a stranger? Talking it through takes careful handling. Here are some tips:

### Choose the right time

When you're physically close to someone there may be too much excitement around to discuss things coolly. Pick a moment before you're cuddling up together, when your head can rule your feelings.

### Be bold

Suggesting you use a condom isn't easy. But your lover may be desperately

plucking up courage to mention the subject too. Chances are he or she will feel relieved rather than insulted.

### Don't beat about the bush

Say something straightforward and simple, like "Have you got a condom, if not I have". Alternatively, you could suggest using the condom as contraception.

### Team up together

There's no really tactful way of asking if someone has a clean bill of health. But you can make it clear that you're not just protecting yourself and it's not meant as an insult. By playing safe you're teaming up together to protect each other. Remember — you can't tell who's got the virus.

If you really can't discuss it, just use a condom anyway.

## RELIABILITY

A properly tested condom has passed the strict tests of the British Standards Institution, so choose one with the Kitemark on the pack.

The condom is an excellent protective, if used properly. This is a big 'if'. More problems are caused by the users than the condom itself. Tests show that for every 100 couples using condoms very carefully and consistently, 2 will have a pregnancy in a year. But with less careful and consistent use, up to 15 could have a pregnancy; and there is also a potential risk of HIV infection. The condom does not give 100% protection, but it's very much better than nothing.

### Using lubricants and spermicides

Most condoms are lubricated, and roll on easily. If you have difficulty, try a water-based lubricating jelly on the condom. Your pharmacist can advise.

Greases can damage the rubber, so **don't use oil-based lubricants like petroleum jelly or other oils.**

Anal sex (where the penis enters the rectum or back passage) carries a higher risk of infections, and is best avoided. If it takes place always use a condom with plenty of lubricant, taking care the condom does not split.

Tests show that spermicides — creams which kill sperm — may give extra protection against infection. They also give extra lubrication.

Lubricants and spermicides can be used as part of lovemaking.

Remember... even if you use another contraceptive method — such as the pill — you'll still need a condom to protect against infection.

## Tips

### TO REMEMBER

- Always use a new condom. Check the pack expiry date. Keep a supply handy where they can't be damaged by heat, light or damp.
- Take the condom out of the pack carefully, making sure that the foil, fingernails or rings do not damage the fine rubber.
- Only use the condom after the penis becomes erect and before it makes any contact with your partner's genital area. This is important because some fluid can seep from the penis early in lovemaking.
- Gently squeeze the last centimetre of the closed end between finger and thumb to expel trapped air and make space for the semen.

Keeping this space 'air free', hold the condom at the tip of the erect penis and, with the flat part of your fingers, roll it carefully over the penis.



- After climaxing but before the erection is completely lost, hold the condom rim firmly around the penis so that when the penis is withdrawn the condom doesn't slip off, accidentally spilling semen.
- Never re-use condoms. Wrapped in tissue, they should flush away, and shouldn't float back up to the top of the toilet. Dispose of them carefully!