

**A.I.D.S. and the condom : a guide to safer sex with Durex condoms /  
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# A.I.D.S.

AND THE CONDOM



A GUIDE TO SAFER SEX  
WITH DUREX™ CONDOMS

At the moment very few people in this country suffer from AIDS but doctors are concerned that the disease might spread more widely and more quickly in the future. The Government and the medical profession are recommending that condoms should be used to help prevent AIDS. This leaflet has been produced to explain what AIDS is and how condoms might help to prevent it. It contains guidelines for safer sex and gives full instructions for the use of the condom.

It's not possible to tell you everything you need to know about AIDS in a leaflet, but if you are considering using the condom for the first time or are returning to this method, it should give you the information that you need.

**Q. WHAT IS AIDS?**

**A.** AIDS stands for the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. It is caused by a virus (called HIV) which attacks the body's immune system and makes it vulnerable to infections which are not normally harmful. People who develop AIDS become ill from a variety of infections which they cannot fight off and sadly the majority die. The most common illnesses which affect AIDS patients are a form of cancer called Kaposi's sarcoma (which covers the skin in large reddish blue or dark brown blotches) and a type of pneumonia called pneumocystis carinii.

It is possible to carry the AIDS virus without having AIDS itself. People can carry the virus for many years before developing AIDS. However, because the virus hasn't been around for very long nobody knows how many people who carry the virus will develop the syndrome.

**Q. HOW CAN YOU CATCH THE AIDS VIRUS?**

**A.** Because of the publicity about AIDS, people are naturally very scared of the disease and worried

about catching the virus. In fact, it is a very difficult virus to catch and doctors say you will not contract it through normal day-to-day contact with an AIDS carrier.

Current medical opinion is that you **cannot** catch the virus through simply touching an AIDS carrier or sharing cups, plates or cutlery with an AIDS carrier. Doctors say it is perfectly safe to eat food which has been prepared by an AIDS carrier.

When a person is infected with the AIDS virus, it is found in their blood and in their bodily secretions (semen, vaginal fluid, urine, saliva, teardrops, faeces, breast milk).

Virtually every case of infection with the virus has occurred in one of the following ways:-

- through sexual contact - vaginal or anal intercourse or other high risk sexual practices with an AIDS virus carrier
- through sharing hypodermic needles for injection (as drug addicts do)
- from an infected mother to a child, where babies have become infected in the womb or caught the virus from breast milk
- through transfusion with contaminated blood (though it must be noted that in the United Kingdom all blood is screened for the virus and there is virtually no risk of contamination).

**Q. WHO CAN GET THE AIDS VIRUS?**

**A.** Anybody can catch the virus and develop AIDS. At the moment AIDS is mostly limited to relatively small groups such as homosexuals and drug abusers but there is now evidence that the virus has spread to heterosexual people through sexual contact with AIDS carriers. Now that the virus has entered the heterosexual population, many more people are in danger of catching it.



**Q. HOW CAN YOU TELL IF YOU HAVE THE AIDS VIRUS?**

**A.** Unless you have had sexual contact with a member of one of the high risk groups (male homosexuals and bisexuals, drug addicts and prostitutes), it is extremely unlikely that you are carrying the virus.

But if you think that you may have had sexual contact with an AIDS carrier, then it may be advisable to have a blood test to put your mind at rest.

If you are worried, the place to go for a test is an STD (sexually transmitted disease) clinic. You will be able to find one through your GP or family planning clinic. Some telephone directories have numbers to ring under VD or Venereal Diseases, and there are notices in many public lavatories.

You may have read newspaper articles which detail the symptoms of AIDS itself, such as loss of appetite and difficulty in breathing. You should remember that these symptoms can be caused by many other illnesses and do not necessarily mean that you have AIDS. However, if you do experience these symptoms you should consult your doctor.

**Q. IS THERE ANY CURE FOR AIDS?**

**A.** There is no cure for AIDS and there is no vaccine to prevent people from catching the virus. Scientists are working very hard to find drugs and vaccines to combat AIDS, but even if research is successful they predict that no cure or vaccine will be available for many years.

**Q. HOW CAN YOU AVOID GETTING THE AIDS VIRUS?**

**A.** If you are not a drug user and are in a permanent relationship in which both you and your partner have been faithful, you are in very little danger of

catching the AIDS virus. However, if you decide to have a sexual relationship with a new partner, you should remember that there is a possibility that they might be carrying the virus (even without knowing it) and it is advisable to pay attention to safer sex guidelines.

**Q. WHAT IS SAFER SEX?**

**A.** Although the only way to be certain of not catching the AIDS virus is to give up sex altogether, few people would consider doing this. If you want to continue to have sex and you are suspicious that your partner could perhaps have the virus, then you should know that there are some sexual activities which are safer than others. The safer sex code given below details sexual activities which you should avoid and those which are relatively safe.

- Anal intercourse should be avoided. It is very risky even if a condom is used, because there are currently no condoms designed to be used in this way.
- The risk of contracting STDs such as cervical cancer, herpes or the AIDS virus may be reduced by using a condom.
- Oral sex should be avoided, particularly if you, or your partner have any cuts, sores or ulcers in and around the mouth.
- Remember that 'wet' or 'French' kissing carries a very small risk if either partner has any sores or ulcers in or around the mouth.
- Mutual masturbation is safe provided neither partner has cuts or sores on their hands.
- It is safe for the man to climax over his partner's body provided the semen does not come into contact with any body openings or open cuts.

## Q. HOW CAN CONDOMS HELP?

A. Doctors have known for a long time that using condoms can help prevent people from catching sexually transmitted diseases such as herpes and cervical cancer. Since the AIDS virus is caught in a similar way to these diseases, the Government and doctors are recommending that they should be used.

All the evidence that has been collected on the protection offered by condoms against sexually transmitted diseases relates solely to vaginal intercourse.

It is difficult to assess the suitability of condoms for any other purpose, therefore Durex condoms are only recommended for use in vaginal intercourse.

To make sure that maximum protection is provided, condoms have to be used properly. They are easy to use and are most effective if the instructions given below are followed every time you make love. Make sure the product used is a well-known brand with some assurance of quality such as the Kite Mark of the British Standards Institution.

- Use a new condom every time you make love.
- Do not use after the date marked on the packet.
- Open the foil pack carefully so there is no danger of tearing the condom inside.
- As soon as the man's penis goes hard and erect, the condom should be unrolled on to it. Do this before the penis touches the partner's body as semen is often released prior to ejaculation.
- To put on the condom, hold the teat or closed end between the thumb and forefinger to expel air and unroll gently down the full length of the penis. Some partners do this as part of their lovemaking.



- Although the condom is strong, it can be torn by sharp fingernails or rings, so be careful.
- If you wish to use an additional lubricant with the condom you should make sure that it is a water-based lubricant, rather than an oil-based one, as this may weaken the rubber.
- After making love, the penis should be slowly withdrawn before it becomes soft, with the condom held firmly in position at the base of the penis. Care should be taken not to spill any semen.
- Afterwards, always remember to keep the condom and penis well clear of the partner's body.
- Wrap the used condom in a tissue and dispose of it hygienically, (flush it down the toilet or put it in the dustbin).

**Q. DO YOU NEED TO USE ANYTHING ELSE FOR CONTRACEPTION?**

**A.** Nearly three million people in this country use the condom as their method of contraception. It is safe, effective and reliable and after the pill it is the second most popular form of non-permanent birth control. People choose the condom because it has many other advantages – it is easy to obtain, does not affect the natural chemistry of the body and it need only be used at the time of intercourse.

Even if you, or your partner, have been sterilised it is still advisable to use the condom to help protect against cervical cancer, the AIDS virus and other sexually transmitted diseases.

**Q. WHY USE DUREX CONDOMS?**

**A.** Over 95% of current condom users choose Durex. LRC Products Limited, the maker of Durex, is the only company which manufactures



condoms in the United Kingdom. Every condom is made to meet the stringent specifications required by the British Standards Institution and LRC carries out many additional tests to ensure that their condoms are of the highest quality and reliability. These tests include electronically testing each condom. This system is so sensitive that if a condom has any imperfections or weak areas it is automatically rejected. This ensures that the Durex range of contraceptive condoms is the best available today.

Because of their high quality standards, Durex condoms are recommended by family planning clinics throughout the country and are stocked by virtually every chemist.



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