

# Condoms

Male and Female

## *What is a male or female condom?*

- A male or female condom is a barrier method of birth control to help prevent pregnancy and protect against sexually transmitted infection (STI), including HIV, chlamydia and gonorrhoea.

## *How does a condom work?*

- A condom acts as a wall barrier to prevent semen and vaginal fluid or blood from being passed between sexual partners during oral, vaginal or anal intercourse.
- A condom helps stop sperm from joining with an egg.
- A condom helps protect against HIV and other STI by keeping bacteria/viruses in semen out of the vagina and by keeping bacteria/viruses in the vagina from entering the penis.
- A condom does not protect against infections that may be transferred by skin to skin contact when the skin is not covered by the condom during sexual activity (e.g. genital herpes or warts).

## *What are the advantages of the condom?*

- Condoms are a low-cost birth control method and are easy to find. They can be bought in pharmacies, grocery stores and in vending machines in public washrooms.
- Condoms offer extra protection from pregnancy when used with another method of birth control.
- **If you are sexually active, condoms provide the best protection against STI, including HIV.**
- Condoms let men and women share the responsibility for birth control and prevention of STI. Both of you can buy and carry condoms.
- People with latex allergies can use polyurethane condoms.
- Polyurethane transmits heat resulting in increased sensation for both men and women.



## *How do I take care of my condom?*

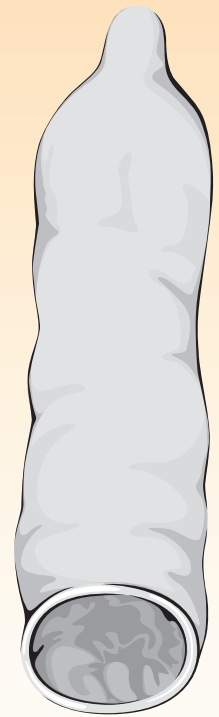
- Store condoms at room temperature and out of direct sunlight. Do not carry them in your pocket or purse.
- Check the expiry date on the package. If the expiry date has passed, do not use the condom.
- When opening or putting on a condom, avoid tearing or putting a hole in the condom with fingernails, a ring or anything sharp like braces, piercings, etc.
- If using lubricant on latex condoms, use water-based lubricants such as KY Jelly and Astroglide. Do not use Vaseline, oils or hand cream. Oils and oil-based products can make latex condoms break.
- Female condoms and some male condoms are made of polyurethane. With these condoms you can use either water or oil-based lubricants.

## *How do I use a condom?*

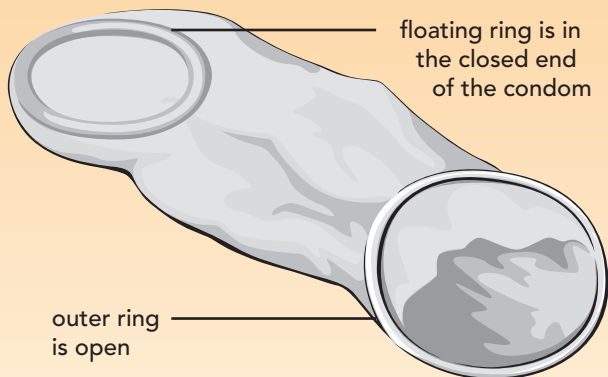
- Put the condom on/in before any genital contact.
- Use a new condom every time you have sex.
- Do not use a male and female condom at the same time because the condoms may stick to each other causing one or both to slip off.
- The condom meets standards if the package states "effective against pregnancy, HIV (AIDS) and STD". Condoms can be non-lubricated, pre-lubricated with a spermicide (Nonoxynol-9) or with a water-based lubricant. Novelty condoms, designed for fun and pleasure, may be made of materials (edible, etc.) that DO NOT prevent STI/HIV or pregnancy. Read the label to see if the condom meets pregnancy and STI protection standards.

**Male Condom**— is a thin covering made of latex or polyurethane, which is used for oral, vaginal or anal sex. These condoms are available in different sizes, shapes and thicknesses and may be textured, colored or flavored.

- Pinch the tip of the condom to squeeze out the air and leave ½ to 1 inch of room in the condom to catch the semen (cum).
- Unroll the condom all the way down to the base of an erect penis.
- Right after ejaculating (coming), before the penis is soft, hold the rim of the condom around the base of the penis while pulling out.
- With perfect use, the male condom is 97 per cent effective in preventing pregnancy. With typical use, the male condom is 86 per cent effective in preventing pregnancy.



**Female Condom**– a soft loose fitting polyurethane pouch used for vaginal sex only.



- Find a comfortable position. Try standing with one foot up on a chair, or sitting with knees apart or squatting down.
- Hold the condom by the floating ring, at the closed end of the condom, with the open end hanging down.
- Insert the condom by squeezing the floating ring and pushing it into the vagina as far as it will go.
- When the condom is in place, the outside ring should lie against the outer vaginal labia (lips).
- You may have better results keeping the condom in place if you guide your partner's erect penis into the condom.

- After intercourse, the female condom should be removed before standing up.
- To remove - squeeze and twist the outer ring to keep the semen in the condom and gently pull the condom out.
- With perfect use, the female condom is 95 per cent effective in preventing pregnancy. With typical use, the female condom is 79 per cent effective in preventing pregnancy.



### *Important to remember*

- Condoms may feel awkward at first and may require some practice to use correctly.
- Yeast infection treatments (e.g. Monistat) may damage the latex condom. Abstinence is recommended during and for three days after yeast infection treatment. If abstinence is not possible, use a polyurethane condom.
- If the condom breaks during sex, contact your birth control clinic or health-care provider as you may want to consider emergency contraception, which can prevent pregnancy.
- **Non-spermicidal condoms are recommended.** Frequent use of a spermicidal condom can cause genital irritation thereby increasing the risk of STI transmission.
- With latex condoms, there may be a slight decrease in sensation for the man. You can increase the sensation by using a drop of water-based lubricant in the condom before putting it on and by using extra lubricant on the outside of the condom.
- Polyurethane breaks easier than latex.
- Put used condoms in the garbage. Do not flush condoms down the toilet.



### *Sexual decision making*

Choose to have sex or not - you have the right to make that decision.

Choose to protect yourself from pregnancy and sexually transmitted infection (STI).

Use a condom every time you have sex to lower your risk of STI.

Talk with your partner about these choices before you have sex.

### *For more information*

Contact your physician, local community health centre or birth control clinic:

Calgary:	(403) 944-7111
Edmonton:	(780) 735-0010
Fort McMurray:	(780) 791-6263
Grande Prairie:	(780) 513-7551
Lethbridge:	(403) 320-0110
Red Deer:	(403) 346-8336

Or

Health Link Alberta (24 hours a day, 7 days a week)

Edmonton, call 408-LINK (5465)

Calgary, call 943-LINK (5465)

Outside the Edmonton

and Calgary local calling areas,

call toll-free 1-866-408-LINK (5465)

STI/HIV Information Line 1-800-772-2437