

Condoms: A Fact Sheet for Health Educators



Young people often look to trusted adults to offer them science-based, nonjudgmental information about sexual and reproductive health. As an educator, it can be difficult to know where to start when it comes to teaching young people about condoms.

However, one of the most important messages to share is that condoms are the *only* birth control method that prevents sexually transmitted infections and pregnancy!¹

Read through this resource for facts on condoms, how to talk about them with youth, & more!

Condoms: What is There to Know?

Types of Condoms

- + Condoms are made from latex, non-latex, or lambskin and can be found at the drugstore.
- + **Latex condoms** are the most effective protection against pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, and HIV.²
- + **Non-latex condoms** are mostly used by people who are allergic or sensitive to latex.³
- + **Lambskin condoms** are thinner and an additional option for those allergic to latex. However, lambskin condoms do not protect against STIs, especially HIV.⁴
- + **Internal condoms** are a type of condom that is non-latex and is placed inside the vagina or anus.⁵

Handle them with Care

- + Store condoms in a cool, dry place away from extreme temperatures. Wallets are not an optimal place for condom storage; the friction can cause wear and tear, which makes it more susceptible to breaking.
- + Note the expiration date on the back of each condom. Condoms used after the expiration date are usually gummy, sticky, or dry and the latex has disintegrated.
- + Don't use teeth or scissors to open the condom package.

Lubricant helps!

- + Lubricant can make condom use pleasurable, but not all lubes are created equal!
- + Use only water-based lubricants, as oil or silicone-based lubricants can impact the latex. Vaseline or other oils break latex.
- + Using lubricant on the inside and outside of the condom can increase pleasure and reduce the risk of breakage.

CONDOMS: A Fact Sheet for Health Educators



Condom Sizing

- + Condoms come in many shapes and sizes!
- + Check out different brands and types of condoms to test which sizes work best. Each brand has a slightly different diameter, length, and shape.
- + **Condoms should feel comfortable.** It should fit snugly around the base and should unroll all the way to the bottom and stay there. If it moves around, it may be too big or small.

Tips on Condom Use

- + Condoms should be put on when the penis is erect.
- + Pinch the tip of the condom to keep air out and roll it down to the base of the penis.
- + Ensure to leave about half an inch of space (about the distance between the tip of the pointer finger and the knuckle) at the tip of the penis. The space is to catch semen and reduce the likelihood of breakage.
- + After intercourse, hold the rim of the condom and the tip simultaneously and roll it off to reduce spilling semen.
- + Condoms are not flushable. Dispose of condoms in a trash can.

Takeaway Messages for Condom Education

- + **Condoms help protect against HIV and other STIs, prevent pregnancy, and can increase intimate connections.**
- + Condoms act as a barrier to keep blood, semen, or vaginal fluids from exchanging during sexual activity.
- + Knowing more about condoms can make someone feel confident to use them.
- + Condoms are easily accessible at the drugstore, inexpensive, and easy to carry!
- + Sometimes, you can get condoms for free at healthcare providers and clinics.
- + Engaging in safe practices such as condom use can contribute to a fulfilling intimate connection.
 - + Some people feel more relaxed due to the security a condom can provide.
 - + Certain condoms may have various features to enhance the overall experience for both partners.

ADDITIONAL CONDOM RESOURCES

ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4660551

Scientific Journal: Condoms: Past, present, and future

nichd.nih.gov/health/topics/menshealth/conditioninfo/risk

Article: How can men reduce the risk of getting a sexually transmitted disease (STD)?

health.clevelandclinic.org/have-a-latex-allergy-4-safe-condom-types-for-you

Article: Have a Latex Allergy? Here Are 4 Safe Non-Latex Condom Options

cdc.gov/condomeffectiveness/internal-condom-use.html

How to use an Internal Condom

Additional Resources at ETR

ETR is here to support your work in improving adolescent health. Check out our offerings!

Educator Training

Check out [available trainings](#) for educators and other youth-serving professionals on implementing sexual health education programs, including evidence-based curricula.



Health Curricula

[View](#) the evidence-based and evidence-informed sexual health curricula offered through ETR.

ETR Store

Check out the [ETR store!](#) We have over 40 offerings to choose from around health promotion messaging including materials on condoms, pregnancy prevention, and sexually transmitted infections.

3 in 30 Series

3 in 30s are **free** webinars in which guests share 3 actionable tips in a 30-minute chat on a variety of health topics. The webinars are recorded and uploaded to our site. Subscribe to our newsletter to stay updated on when we offer 3 in 30s live!



SOURCES

1. World Health Organization. (2023). *Condoms*. Global Sexually Transmitted Infections Programme.
2. Marfatia, Y. S., et. al. (2015). *Condoms: Past, present, and future*. Indian journal of sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS, 36(2), 133-139. <https://doi.org/10.4103/0253-7184.167135>
3. Cleveland Clinic. (2020). *Have a latex allergy? Here are 4 safe Non-Latex Condom Options*.
4. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2021). *How can men reduce the risk of getting a sexually transmitted disease (STD)?*. Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.
5. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2022). *How to Use an Internal Condom*. National Center for HIV, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention.



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