

How To Use a Male Condom

When used consistently and correctly, male condoms can be up to 98% effective in preventing pregnancy and protecting against sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV. But for a condom to work properly, it has to be put on and removed properly. Here are the basic steps for correct condom use:

1. Check the expiration date on the condom. Old condoms can be dry or weakened and can break more easily. If you have a condom without an expiration date, don't use it.
2. Carefully open the package. Watch out for your teeth, sharp nails, or anything you might have on your hands that could accidentally tear the condom.
3. Put the condom on as soon as the penis is erect, prior to penetration. For increased sensitivity, put a drop or two of water-based lubricant in the tip before you put it on.
4. If you are uncircumcised, pull back your foreskin before rolling the condom on.
5. Put the rolled-up condom over the tip of your penis. Be sure the rolled-up ring is on the outside. Leave some space at the tip for the semen to collect.
6. Squeeze the tip gently so no air is trapped inside. Doing this decreases the chances that the condom will break.
7. With one hand holding onto and squeezing the tip of the condom, use your other hand to unroll the condom all the way to the base of the penis. Make sure it is rolled all the way down the shaft.
8. If you're not using a lubricated condom, you can add some water-based lubricant to the outside of the condom.
9. After ejaculation, while the penis is still erect, hold on to the condom at the base of the penis as you withdraw from your partner, making sure it doesn't slip off.
10. Wrap the condom in a tissue and throw it in the trash – don't flush it down the toilet.

Additional tips:

- Have extra condoms available in case the first is damaged or torn before use, is put on incorrectly, or if you have repeated intercourse.
- Put on the condom *before* the penis comes in contact with your partner's mouth, anus, or vagina.
- Make sure the rolled ring is on the outside before unrolling. If the condom does not unroll, it's on upside-down. Throw it away and start over with a new one (this way your partner will not be exposed to your pre-cum, which can cause pregnancy or transmit an STI).
- Have lubrication available. Lubrication reduces friction and helps prevent the condom from tearing. For latex condoms, use only water-based lubricants (e.g., KY Lubricant or Jelly, Wet, Astroglide, or Aqualube), not oil-based lubricants (e.g. petroleum jelly, body lotion, massage oil, or baby oil). For plastic (polyurethane) condoms, any type of lubricant can be used.
- For increased pleasure, add a few drops of water-based lubricant inside the tip of the condom before it is rolled on. This allows for a slippery area between the head of the penis (where the nerve endings are) and the condom, thus increasing sensation and pleasure.
- Use a new condom for every new sexual act (e.g., switching from vaginal sex to anal sex).
- Store condoms in a cool and dry place, out of direct sunlight (heat can weaken latex). Don't store condoms in your wallet!
- If a condom feels stiff, sticky, or looks damaged in any way, throw it away, regardless of its expiration date.

****NOTE: Male condoms and lubrication are free and readily available at NYU.****

For more information, contact Health Promotion at (212) 443-1234 or email health.promotion@nyu.edu.