

What is a female condom?

The female condom is a 7-inch polyurethane pouch that fits into the vagina. It is a barrier method of birth control. It can also protect women against several sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).

How is it used?

There is a flexible ring at the closed end of the thin, soft pouch. A slightly larger ring is at the open end. The ring at the closed end holds the condom in place in the vagina. The ring at the open end rests outside the vagina. When the condom is in place during sexual intercourse, there is no contact of the vagina and cervix with the skin of the penis or with secretions from the penis.

The female condom can be inserted up to 8 hours before sex. Follow these instructions for inserting it:

Find a comfortable position. Three positions are:

- ♀ standing with one foot on a chair
- ♀ squatting with your knees apart
- ♀ lying down with your legs bent and knees apart.

Hold the female condom with the open end hanging down. Squeeze the inner ring with your thumb and middle finger. Holding the inner ring squeezed together, insert the ring into the vagina and push the inner ring and pouch into the vagina past the pubic bone.

When properly inserted, the outer ring will hang down slightly outside the vagina. During sex, it may be helpful to use your hand to guide the penis into the vagina inside the female condom. If the condom seems to be sticking to and moving with the penis rather than resting in the vagina, stop and add lubricant to the inside of the condom (near the outer ring) or to the penis.

To remove the female condom after intercourse: Squeeze and twist the outer ring to keep the semen inside the pouch. Pull the female condom out gently

and throw it away in the garbage. Do not flush it down the toilet.

Do not reuse female condoms. Use a new one every time you have intercourse. Also, do not use a male and female condom at the same time. Be careful not to tear the condom with fingernails or sharp objects.

What are the benefits?

The female condom protects against pregnancy about as well as a diaphragm. Its failure rate with typical use is 21%. The female condom gives women a way to help protect themselves against some sexually transmitted diseases. As is true of latex condoms for men, neither the AIDS virus (HIV) nor the hepatitis B virus can penetrate the polyurethane condom for women.

The polyurethane is less likely to cause an allergic reaction than a male latex condom. The female condom is less likely to break or tear. You do not need a prescription to get a female condom. The female condom provides an opportunity for women to share responsibility for the use of condoms with their partners.

What are the disadvantages?

Each female condom can be used just once and costs \$2.50 to \$5.00.

The outer ring is somewhat cumbersome.

Like the male condom, the female condom does not provide complete protection against all STDs. Infections can be transmitted by organisms on areas of the skin that are not covered by the condom. For example, the condom does not provide reliable protection against the herpes simplex virus or the venereal wart virus.

It has a high failure rate.

It makes crackling and popping noises during intercourse.

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Barrier Contraception

The Male Condom & The Female Condom



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Male Condom

What is a male condom?

The male condom, sometimes called a rubber, is a method of birth control used by men. The condom provides a barrier that stops sperm from going into a woman's uterus (womb). Condoms can also help protect against sexually transmitted infections, including AIDS.

Male condoms are available in a wide variety of styles, colors, and textures. They may be made of latex, polyurethane (a type of plastic), or animal skin. Some condoms are lubricated. To make sure you have a type of condom that protects against disease, check the condom package for a statement that the condom prevents disease.

How is it used?

You roll the tube-shaped condom over the erect (hard) penis just before intercourse. There is usually a place at the tip of the condom to hold semen after an orgasm. Each condom must be used just once and then thrown away. To protect against pregnancy and infection, condoms must be used correctly and used every time you have intercourse.

Use a new condom every time you have intercourse.

Do not unroll the condom before you put it on. Place the condom over the tip of the penis when it is erect (hard). If the penis is uncircumcised, pull the foreskin back before putting the condom on.



While squeezing the tip of the condom, (this releases any trapped air and prevent it from bursting when semen is released during ejaculation), roll the condom down to cover all of the penis.

After ejaculation and before the

penis gets soft, hold onto the condom at the base of the penis. Carefully withdraw the penis from your partner, making sure that the condom does not slip off and spill any sperm.

Throw away the used condom. Do not reuse it.

You can use a spermicide foam or jelly with a condom to help prevent pregnancy if the condom breaks.

WARNING: Do NOT use oils, lotions, or Vaseline (petrolatum, or petroleum jelly) with latex condoms as a lubricant. Oil-based substances can make latex condoms break. It is OK to use oil-based lubricants with polyurethane condoms. If you want to use a packaged lubricated condom, the CDC (Center for Disease Control) recommends using one that is lubricated with silicone rather than with spermicide.

What are the benefits?

Male condoms have a variety of benefits:

- ♂ They are about 90% effective in preventing pregnancy.
- ♂ Latex and polyurethane condoms provide protection against the spread of sexually transmitted diseases. Male and female condoms are the only forms of birth control that help prevent the spread of disease.
- ♂ They can be bought in drugstores and markets without a prescription.
- ♂ They are a relatively inexpensive method of birth control.
- ♂ They are small, easy to carry, and disposable.
- ♂ There are no side effects from using a condom.

What are the disadvantages?

The disadvantages of male condoms are:

- ♂ They can leak or break during intercourse, releasing sperm into the vagina and possibly causing pregnancy.
- ♂ They may slip off when the penis is withdrawn from the vagina and spill sperm into the vagina, again possibly causing pregnancy.
- ♂ Lovemaking is interrupted to put the condom on. However, the process of using the condom can become a pleasurable part of foreplay for both partners.
- ♂ A man might have decreased sensation with condoms. This is less likely with lubricated condoms.
- ♂ If a condom is exposed to heat for a long time (for example, from being carried in a back pocket), it may weaken and break.
- ♂ A rare disadvantage of latex condoms is that you might have or develop a latex allergy, which may be mild or severe. Symptoms of latex allergy range from mild itching and redness of the skin to life-threatening anaphylactic (allergic) shock. If you are allergic to latex, you can use polyurethane condoms instead. Polyurethane male condoms are reported to have slightly higher breakage and slippage rates than latex condoms, but appear to be about as effective in preventing pregnancy as latex condoms.

