

Condoms and HIV - Sexual risks, part 3

If you use condoms the right way every time you have sex, they are very effective in preventing HIV infection. There are two main types of condoms: male and female.



Male Condoms

Latex condoms provide the best protection against HIV. Natural or lambskin condoms don't block HIV. Polyurethane or polyisoprene condoms are good options for people with latex allergies.

Use water or silicone-based lubricants to lower the chances that a condom will break or slip during sex. Don't use oil-based lubricants with latex condoms. They can weaken the condom and cause it to break. Don't use lubricants containing nonoxynol-9. This spermicide or sperm killer irritates the lining of the vagina and anus, increasing the risk of getting HIV.

The right way to use a male condom:

- DO use a condom every time you have sex.
- DO put on a condom before having sex.
- DO read the package and check the expiration date.
- DO make sure there are no tears or defects
- DO store condoms in a cool, dry place
- DO use latex or polyurethane condoms
- DO use water-based or silicone-based lubricant to prevent breakage



Female Condoms

A female condom is a thin pouch made of a latex product called nitrile. When worn in the vagina, the female condom reduces the risk of HIV infection as much as male condoms. Some people use female condoms for anal sex but it is not known how well this prevents HIV.



Be sure to get answers to any questions you have about HIV/AIDS. Your public health department, health care provider, and public library can help.

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