**Why Choose a Barrier Method?**

A barrier method is best if you are looking to protect against both pregnancy and Sexually Transmitted or Blood Borne Infections (STBBIs).

While there are many different options someone may choose to use as birth control, generally, only barrier methods can protect against STBBIs (the exception being the use of vaccines/antivirals for HPV and HIV prevention)

Barrier methods can usually be bought without a prescription, are widely available, and, with practice, are easy to use.

You can use barrier methods both with partners as well as with sex toys!

**How do Barrier Methods Work to Prevent Pregnancy?**

Barrier methods are meant to physically block the transmission of sexual fluid, prevent the sperm from reaching and entering an egg (fertilization), or prevent the fertilized egg from implanting in the uterus (“womb”) and starting to grow.

New methods of birth control are being developed and tested all the time. Remember, what is appropriate for an individual at one point may change with time and circumstances.

Unfortunately, while many methods of birth control are 95-99.99% effective with perfect use, there is no birth control method, except for abstinence, that is considered 100% effective.

There are many forms of barrier methods, and they all have advantages and disadvantages. While barrier methods of contraception generally do not have the side effects of hormonal contraceptives, some forms of barrier contraception (such as condoms and dental dams) may be obtained without a prescription.

Except for condoms, dental dams, and other latex (or polyurethane) products, most methods of barrier contraception are not effective in preventing STIs.

For example, some individuals may choose to use a spermicide (used to kill sperm before entering the uterus) and another barrier method. However, the World Health Organization recommends against using spermicides if you are not in a permanent, monogamous relationship- because spermicides can cause irritation to the skin and INCREASE the risk of getting an STI!

**Some examples of barrier methods are:**

* Internal Condom
* External Condom
* Dental Dam
* Spermicides
* Lorals Undies

**Why do some people choose barrier methods for birth control?**

Not all individuals are recommended to use hormonal methods. For example, older individuals and smokers may be at a greater risk of stroke, heart attack, or blood clotting if they use hormonal birth control. Also, individuals who are prone to migraines or depression may not be able to use hormonal methods.

In addition, some individuals choose not to use hormones. They may be opposed to taking a medication that interferes with their body's cycles. In these cases, barrier methods may be an acceptable alternative.

Overall, barrier methods are effective in preventing pregnancy when used correctly. However, some factors can play a part in exactly HOW effective. For example, barrier methods may be slightly less effective for individuals who have had a vaginal birth because their cervix is somewhat more prominent. Therefore, there is more surface area to cover.

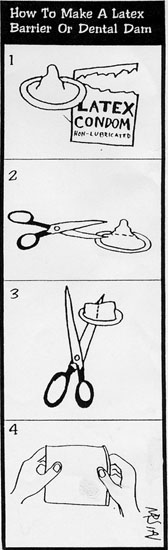
When choosing the best method for you, here are some things to consider:

**Are you in only monogamous relationships?**

We know this is a personal question… however, if you have a new sexual partner, even once or twice, you should always use a barrier method that can protect against STBBIs even if you are using another method of birth control.  
  
Remember to get regular STBBI testing, as no method is 100% effective. We recommend **annual testing at minimum for every sexually active person, even in monogamous relationships.**

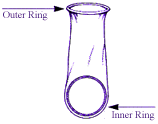
**How would you react if you or your partner got pregnant?**

I know what you're thinking… "But I'm here to PREVENT pregnancy!" No method is foolproof, and unfortunately, barrier methods are generally less effective than hormonal methods. So, if a pregnancy feels like the end of the world to you at this point, then a more effective hormonal method may be better, or a combination of hormonal and barrier (taking the pill while using condoms, for example).

**How to make a dental dam:**

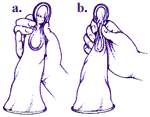
**How to use an internal (vaginal) condom:**

1. Check the expiry date.
2. Remove the condom from the package and straighten it out.

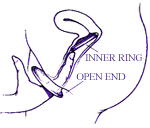


3. a) Hold the inner ring between your thumb and middle finger. Put your index finger on the pouch between your other two fingers, or

b) squeeze the inner ring



1. While holding/squeezing the inner ring, insert the condom as far as it will go in the vagina. It is in the right place when the woman can no longer feel the inner ring in the vagina. Don’t worry – it cannot go too far.



1. Make sure the condom is not twisted. Also, the outer ring should be outside the vaginal opening and should stay in this position during sex.



When both partners are ready, guide the erect penis or sex toy directly into the condom. Make sure that the penis or sex toy does not go into the vagina outside of the pouch.

**Planned Parenthood NL**

**Sexual Health Questions?  
We Have Answers!**

**Location**:  
47 St Clare Avenue, St. John’s, NL

**Hours of Operation:**

Monday: 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Tuesday: 12:00 pm - 7:00 pm

Wednesday: 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Thursday: 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Friday: 9 am - 4:00 pm

Saturday: 12:00 pm - 5:30 pm

**Contact Information:**  
Phone: 579-1009  
Toll-free: 1-877-NO MYTHS  
(1-877-666-9847)

Email: csc@ppnlshc.com

**Website:**  
www.plannedparenthoodnlshc.com/

**Social Media:**

Facebook: Planned Parenthood – NLSHC

Instagram: @plannedparenthoodnlshc

TikTok: @plannedparenthoodnl

**Please check our Facebook page for additional information regarding resources, events, or clinic closures.**

**Revised October 2023**

**Barrier Methods**

