



The External Condom

What is an External Condom?

The external condom is a sheath that covers an erect penis or a sex toy that is able to be inserted (like a vibrator or dildo). The condom acts as a barrier during sexual activity. When used on an erect penis, the condom prevents bodily fluids (semen and pre-ejaculate) from touching and entering the partner's body.

Pre-ejaculate ("pre-cum") is a fluid that is discharged from the tip of an erect penis before it releases semen. It can contain HIV and other STIs, and though it normally lacks any sperm, the mixing of leftover semen in the urethra with the pre-ejaculate can still cause unwanted pregnancies.

Since we often do not see pre-ejaculate, or forget that it is there, it is important that the condom is placed on the erect penis before *any* bodily contact. The condom also helps to protect individuals against their partner's bodily fluids such as vaginal fluid, blood, or discharge.

When a condom is used on a sex toy, it helps to keep the toy clean from viruses and bacteria. If a sex toy is shared between two partners, a new condom should be placed on the sex toy every time the toy is switched between partners. Also, it is important to thoroughly wash sex toys after use.

When Should I Use an External Condom?

An external condom is used for vaginal and anal sex, which includes penetration with a penis or sex toy. It is **also** used when performing oral sex on a penis. It is a good idea to use a non-lubricated or flavoured condom during oral sex, since regular condoms have a medicinal taste. Many people believe that oral sex is safe, but you can still get an STI in your mouth, throat, tongue, and lips, or pass cold sores onto someone's genital area (which is known as genital herpes.) You do not have to have sexual intercourse to get STIs!

Using a condom during vaginal, oral, and anal sex will help to protect you and your partner(s) against STIs. If a condom is used on a penis for vaginal penetration or if the penis is placed near the vaginal opening, it will also help to protect against pregnancy.

What Type of Condom Should I Use?

Condoms are normally made of latex, but polyurethane condoms are a good alternative for people allergic to latex. Be careful, because some non-latex condoms do NOT protect from STIs. There are many choices available regarding condom style and shape. Each style is effective, but it narrows down to personal preference.

Where Can I Get Condoms?

You can get condoms in drugstores, sex stores, on-line, and in vending machines. Remember that Planned Parenthood provides **FREE** latex external condoms and personal lubricant. We also have polyurethane condoms and flavoured condoms for those who need them.

How Effective Are External Condoms?

Condoms offer good protection against STIs that are passed through bodily fluids, such as chlamydia and gonorrhoea. On the other hand, condoms only protect up to 50% with STIs that are passed through skin-to-skin contact, such as genital herpes and genital warts.

When used perfectly, condoms are approximately 98% effective in protecting against pregnancy. However, since people are not perfect, typical condom use results in about 85% effectiveness in protecting against pregnancy.

How Do I Properly Use a Condom?

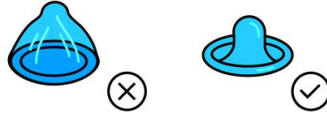
Everyone should learn how to use a condom properly. Never rely on your partner to use a condom correctly, since they may not follow all of the steps. *You need to be responsible for your own sexual health!*

If an individual is uncomfortable with using a condom, they can practice putting one on their penis alone to reduce pressure. If you are not comfortable with putting a condom on your partner, practicing on a wooden penis, dildo or banana will help. Condoms have to be used properly and consistently to be effective in protecting you against STIs and pregnancy.

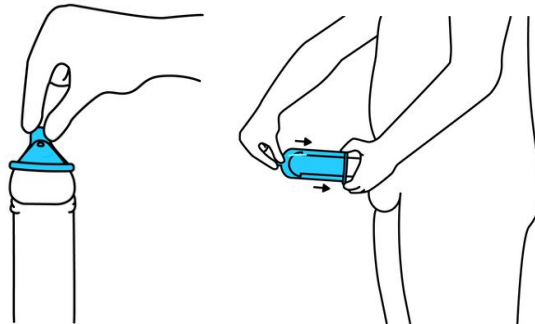
Follow these steps for effective condom use:

- 1. Check the expiry date. Squeeze the condom package for the presence of an air bubble. If there is no air, do not use the condom since there may be a hole in the package and condom.**
- 2. Carefully open the package and remove the condom. *Do not use your teeth or scissors to open the package!***

3. **Make sure the condom is right side up. The rim should be on the outside so it looks like a little hat, and it will unroll easily. You can unroll it a little bit before putting it on to make sure it's right-side out. If a condom is placed upside down on an erect penis, throw it away and start over because pre-ejaculate is normally present on the tip of an erect penis.**

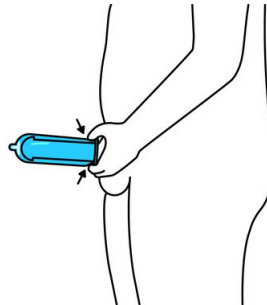


4. **Pinch the tip of the condom and place on the head of the penis with one hand, leaving a small amount of space to collect semen, and unroll the condom right down to the base of the penis with the other.**



5. Have sex!

6. **After ejaculation (release of semen) takes place, hold the condom securely around the base and remove the penis.**



If the condom is used on a sex toy, simply remove the condom when needed. If you are sharing the toy with your partner, replace the old condom with a new one before sharing.

7. **Throw the condom in the garbage – do not flush it down the toilet, as it can clog pipes.**

Never use a condom more than once!

Tips on Condom Use

- **Never use two condoms at once.** The friction between the condoms increases the chances of the condoms breaking.

- If you are using a latex condom and you want to add extra lubricant, use a **water-based lubricant**. An oil-based lubricant will break the latex down.
- Make sure a condom fits you or your partner properly. **Regular condoms normally fit on the majority of penises**. However, if you or your partner is far above average in penis size, there are extra large condoms available. Regular sized condoms may break during use if they are too small.
- If you are using condoms to protect you and your partner against STIs, **refrain from using condoms with spermicide**. The spermicide can actually irritate the penis and vagina making you more susceptible to STIs.
- **Never use a flavoured condom for vaginal sex**. The sugar content in the condom can cause a yeast infection.
- **Store your condoms in a cool, dry place** away from any sharp objects and direct sunlight. Do not keep them in your pocket, car, or bathroom for long periods of time (over 1 month), because excessive heat and moisture can damage condoms over time.

If you have any further questions regarding condom use, other safer sex methods, or birth control, please feel free to drop by our Centre or contact us by phone or email. If you want to see a doctor regarding any sexual health concern, please call us to make an appointment.

Sexual Health Questions? We have Answers!

Location:

47 St. Clare Avenue, St. John's, NL, A1C 2J9

Hours:

Monday: 9am – 4:30pm
 Tuesday: 9am – 4:30pm
 Wednesday: 9am – 4:30pm
 Thursday: 12pm – 6:00pm
 Friday: 9am – 4:30pm

Phone:

579-1009
 Toll Free: 1-877-NO MYTHS
 (1-877-666-9847)

Website:

www.plannedparenthoodnlshc.com

Email:

pp.nlshc@gmail.com

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