

# Male Condom

Male condoms are inexpensive, readily available without a prescription, and used only at the time of sexual activity. They are worn over the penis during sexual intercourse or oral sex and they come in a variety of sizes, thinness, textures, and colours/flavours. They are also available with a wide selection of lubricants on the condom to help enhance sensitivity and pleasure for both partners (i.e. warming/tingling sensations, premium silicone-base, climax-control).

Most condoms are made of latex, but non-latex condoms are also available in polyurethane and polyisoprene. Latex, polyurethane and polyisoprene condoms are also effective for preventing most sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

## How does it work?

- The condom is worn over the penis during sexual activity. It should be put on before any skin-to-skin genital contact occurs.
- The condom acts as a physical barrier preventing direct contact between the penis and the vagina. It prevents the exchange of body fluids and also traps the sperm in the condom so it cannot fertilize the egg.
- The condom is thrown away after intercourse. A new one must be used for each repeated act of intercourse.

## How effective is it?

- **Typical use failure rate:** 180 of 1000 women during first year of use
- **Perfect use failure rate:** 20 of 1000 women during first year of use



## Advantages

- + Widely available without a prescription
- + Inexpensive, safe and effective
- + Protect against most STIs
- + Non-latex options available for those with latex allergies or sensitivities
- + Both partners participate in their use – shared responsibility
- + Hormone-free
- + May decrease the risk of cervical cancer
- + May help the wearer avoid premature ejaculation
- + May be used with other contraception methods to increase their contraceptive effectiveness

## Disadvantages

- Must be available at time of sexual activity
- Must be stored and handled properly – be sure to check the expiration date
- May reduce sexual spontaneity
- May slip or break during intercourse
- May reduce sensitivity for either partner
- May interfere with the maintenance of an erection
- People with latex allergies or latex sensitivity cannot use latex condoms, but may be able to use non-latex condoms
- Requires participation of both partners