

Male Condoms come in a variety of shapes, styles, and sizes. Some are designed to prolong sex, provide extra stimulation, add flavor, or even vibrate. Polyurethane condoms are a good alternative for those with a latex sensitivity or allergy. Flavored condoms are designed for oral sex and should not be used for anal or vaginal sex.

Follow these six steps for male condom use:

- Check the expiration date and make sure the package is still airtight. Open carefully.
- Make sure the rim of the rolled up condom is facing outward and place it on the head of the penis/object.
- Pinch tip to leave room for ejaculate.
- Roll condom to base of penis/object.
- Enjoy the action. When finished, hold base of condom while pulling out.
- Remove condom and throw in trash (do not flush).

The Female Condom (FC) can be used during vaginal or anal intercourse. A woman can insert the condom into her vagina before sex, creating a barrier similar to a male condom. For protection during anal sex, remove the inner ring from the FC and place the condom over the finger/object/penis before penetration. Do not use FC together with a male condom.

Follow these six steps for FC vaginal use:

- Check the expiration date and make sure the package is still airtight. Open carefully.
- Pinch inner ring of FC.
- Gently insert closed end into vagina.
- Place your index finger inside the condom and push it up as far as it will go. Leave outer ring outside the vagina.
- Enjoy the action. When finished, twist outer ring and gently pull out FC.
- Throw in trash (do not flush).

contact us

Health Services at Columbia

www.health.columbia.edu

General Information: 212.854.2284

After Hours Clinician-on-call: 212.854.9797

For more information on this and other health topics, visit Go Ask Alice!
www.goaskalice.columbia.edu



Health Services at Columbia supports the well-being of students and the University community.

safer sex



Safer Sex is having oral, anal or vaginal sex, or any other sexual activity without exchanging blood, semen, or vaginal fluids. Safer sex reduces the risk of transmitting sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV, and unintended pregnancy.

Safer sex can make sex more satisfying by enhancing orgasm, adding variety, relieving anxiety, improving partner communication, prolonging sex play, and increasing intimacy and trust between partners.

Safer sex starts with choosing when and with whom you have sex. Ask yourself: Have I expressed what I want? Do I know what my partner wants? Am I certain that consent has been given? Is my potential partner sober enough to decide whether or not to have sex? Am I sober enough to know that I've correctly gauged consent?

Some safer sex techniques include:

- Using a male or female condom correctly and consistently for anal and vaginal sex
- Using a latex barrier (i.e., condom or dental dam) for oral sex
- Kissing, touching and other activities where no blood, semen, or vaginal fluids are exchanged
- Masturbation

Condoms help prevent pregnancy and STIs (including HIV) when used consistently and correctly. When using either male or female condoms, remember to use a new one if you switch between vaginal, oral, or anal sex, or if you switch between multiple partners. Never reuse a condom. Additional lube can always be added as needed for comfort and pleasure.

Store all condoms in a cool, dry place away from direct sunlight. Use a new condom for each sexual act. Do not use a condom if it is damaged, discolored, deflated, or brittle.

Dental dams are square pieces of latex used to reduce transmission of STIs (including HIV) when placed over the clitoris, vulva or anus for oral sex.

- Place the dam evenly over the area.
- Hold the edges of the dam apart while you pleasure your partner.
- Do not reuse or flip over a dental dam during use.

Lube – Using a water- or silicone-based lubricant can help make sex safer and more pleasurable. Lube increases the body's own natural lubrication, can make sex more comfortable, and can help keep condoms from breaking. Oil-based lube (Vaseline, cooking oil, hand lotion, etc.) should not be used with latex condoms as it can cause breakage. Nonoxynol 9 (a spermicide contained in some lubes) should be avoided as it can increase chances of transmitting STIs (including HIV). Flavored lubes can add some spice to oral sex, but should not be used for vaginal or anal sex as they may cause yeast infections if they include glycerin or sugar.

Masturbation is self-stimulation for sexual pleasure and is an effective method of safer sex. Masturbation prevents pregnancy and STI transmission and helps women and men increase their genital sensations and physical pleasures, improving the quality of their orgasms. Learning what feels good is an important step toward feeling pleasure more regularly, with or without a partner. Keep toys clean (water and antibacterial soap will usually do the trick). Follow the manufacturer's instructions for cleaning and types of lube to use with toys.

Free safer sex supplies available on campus:

- John Jay Hall, 4th Floor (PCMS)
- Lerner Hall, 3rd Floor (SVPRP)
- Wien Hall, 1st Floor (Alice!)

Emergency Contraception (EC) can be used after sex to help avoid unintended pregnancy. You may need EC if:

- Sex was unplanned or unwanted
- Contraceptives were not used or did not work (condom broke or slipped off, diaphragm or cervical cap slipped out of place, etc.)

Plan B (levonorgestrel), an EC pill, is now available without a prescription to women 18 years of age or older. Bring an ID with proof of age to the pharmacist's counter to buy Plan B. If you are under 18, you will need a prescription for Plan B. Columbia University students can obtain a prescription for EC by making an appointment with Primary Care Medical Services.

Consider keeping a dose of EC on hand to avoid worrying about availability if you choose to use it.

STI Testing – Safer sex includes getting tested for STIs, including HIV. Columbia students can visit Primary Care Medical Services to discuss STI screening with their provider. There isn't one all-inclusive test for STIs. You and your provider can discuss which tests are appropriate for you depending on symptoms and sexual history. The Gay Health Advocacy Project (GHAP), a program of Health Services at Columbia, provides free and confidential HIV testing and counseling to all members of the Columbia community. HIV test results are given in person and take 24 hours to process. You deserve to know your STI status and to feel comfortable asking your partner(s) about his or her status.

Remember, it's called "practicing" safer sex for a reason. It may take some time, but with the right information, an array of options, and an open partner, you can find the method that works best for you.