



## WHY CONDOMS?

### Q: How can I protect myself against STIs?

A: Use condoms. Correctly used and used every time you have sex, condoms are the most effective protection against most STIs, including HIV/AIDs. Oral dams – or thin sheets of latex rubber – are another form of protection. Oral dams are placed over the vulva or anus for protection during oral sex. Water-based lubricants such as KY Jelly, Glyde, Wetstuff, Play or Lifestyles are another good protection. Lubricants make condoms safer by helping to stop condoms breaking and slipping off. They can also make sex more comfortable and pleasurable.

Tip: Always use real lubricants – never oils such as Vaseline or baby oil, which damage condoms.

### Q: What is a condom?






A: A condom is a fine rubber sheath that is rolled on to a man's penis before sex. A condom acts as a barrier, preventing sperm and infections passing between sexual partners. They're used in vaginal, anal, and oral sex.

Tip: Always use condoms to protect yourself against pregnancy and STIs – they're easy to get, easy to use, have no side effects (unless you're allergic to rubber) and help prevent cervical cancer in women.

### Q: How do I use a condom?

A: Check the condom pack to make sure the expiry date has not passed.

#### How do I use a condom?

				
<b>1.</b> Open the packet carefully. Fingernails, rings and teeth can tear the condom. Make sure the penis does not touch the partner's vagina, mouth or anus before being covered by a condom.	<b>2.</b> Check that the condom is the right way up. Pinch the tip of the condom to remove any air.	<b>3.</b> Roll the condom on the hard penis all the way down to the base. If the condom is the wrong way up start again with a new condom.	<b>4.</b> Use a water-based lubricant. Oil-based lubricants such as Vaseline can cause latex or rubber condoms to break.	<b>5.</b> After coming and while the penis is still hard withdraw holding the condom on the base of the penis so that no semen is spilt. Wrap the used condom in tissue or toilet paper and put it in the rubbish. Don't put it down the toilet.

If you are using any vaginal creams you need to talk to a doctor or pharmacist about whether they will affect the condom.

Tip: Always use a new condom and lubricant every time you have sex.

### Q: What else should I know about using condoms?

A: There are a couple of things worth remembering. If a condom is not comfortable, try a different brand. Condoms come in different sizes, shapes, thicknesses, flavours, textures and colours, try them out to see which suits you best. Do not rely on joke or novelty condoms for protection against pregnancy and STIs. If you are allergic to rubber, special condoms are available – ask your health professional.

Tip: Always check a condom's expiry or use-by date.

**Q: Are condoms safe?**

A: Condoms do protect you. Some people say it isn't worth using condoms because they have holes big enough for viruses to get through, but that's not true. Bacteria and viruses such as HIV/AIDS cannot pass through an undamaged condom.

Condoms in NZ are required to meet a standard, this means they are electronically-tested and have been checked for holes and reliable condom brands will refer to the standard and these tests on their packaging.

**Q: What should I do if my condom breaks?**

A: If your condom broke before ejaculation (coming), stop and put on a new condom. If you're worried about getting pregnant, go to a Family Planning Centre, a doctor, or pharmacy for emergency contraception as soon as possible (up to five days after sex, but the earlier the better).

If you are worried about STIs, go to a doctor, Sexual Health Centre, or your local Family Planning Centre for a checkup.

**Q: Why do condoms slip or break?**

A: For a variety of reasons. You might not have put it on correctly, you might have torn it with your fingernail, jewellery or teeth. Condoms sometimes break or slip if you don't use enough lubricant or when you use the wrong lubricant.

Prolonged or very vigorous sex can break condoms. Sometimes condoms perish after being stored for too long in a warm place such as a glove box or hip pocket, or because they're past their use-by date, or due to damage from some thrush treatments. Condoms can slip off as the penis goes soft before withdrawal or during withdrawal.

**Tip:** Talk to your health professional if you have problems using condoms.

**Q: What should I say when my partner refuses to use a condom?**

A: Your partner may have a number of reasons for not using a condom, but none is worth the risk of getting an STI or falling pregnant. So, here are a couple of ways to respond to a reluctant partner.

When he or she says 'it doesn't feel so good', you can say 'it does feel different, but it can still feel good'.

When your partner says 'trust me, I haven't got anything', you can say 'it's not that I don't trust you, but this way we can be sure we are both safe'.

Your partner might say 'I don't have any condoms', you could respond by saying 'I do', or 'we can buy some at the dairy, or the pub, or the supermarket'.

He might say 'but you're on the pill, why do I need to use a condom?' You could reply with 'the pill doesn't give any protection against STIs'.

'I hate them', he says. You might say 'that's a shame, because I won't have sex without one'.

Finally, your partner might say 'condoms are boring'. You could say 'I'm sure we can think of ways to make them fun'.

**Q: Where can I get condoms?**

A: Condoms are easy to get hold of and you are legally allowed to buy them at any age. Pick them up from Family Planning Association centres, chemists, supermarkets, pubs, public toilets, garages, nightclubs, dairies, mail order and sex shops.

**Tip:** Get them on prescription from a doctor, a Sexual Health Centre, or a Family Planning Centre—it's cheaper that way.

**Q: Why is lubricant important?**

A: Lubrication is the wetness that makes it easy to slide the penis in and out during sex. Without sufficient lubrication, condoms are much more likely to break or come off. Use a water-based lubricant for vaginal sex and always add lubrication for anal sex. Spit (saliva) is not usually slippery enough to use as a lubricant, but it may help if nothing else is available.

**Tip:** Use water-based lubricants such as KY Jelly, Wet Stuff, Glyde, Play, and Lifestyles. Never use oil-based lubricants such as petroleum jelly (Vaseline), baby oil, suntan, massage or cooking oils, butter or margarine, or hand lotion.

**Q: Should I use spermicide?**

A: Spermicides are no longer recommended for use with condoms because they can irritate sensitive skin and increase the risk of getting an STI.