

CONDOMS AND SPERMICIDE FACT SHEET

CONDOMS:

HOW CONDOMS WORK

Condoms provide a physical barrier that prevents pregnancy by blocking the passage of semen and are most effective when used “start to finish” during every act of intercourse. When used consistently and correctly, condoms can prevent pregnancy and many sexually transmitted diseases including HIV. There are male and female condoms. The female condom fits in the vagina

ADVANTAGES

- Condoms are inexpensive and available without a prescription.
- With some practice, condoms are easy to use.
- Condoms help protect fertility by preventing STIs
- Condoms involve men in the prevention of pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases
- Condoms can be used as part of sex play, help relieve premature ejaculation and help the man to stay erect.

DISADVANTAGES

- Some women and men feel the condom dulls sensation
- Some believe some sexual excitement is lost when they stop to put on the condom
- Some men are self conscious and feel pressured to hold an erection to keep the condom on or feel pressure to ejaculate
- Many learn to overcome the pressure and enjoy condoms by using them in sex play before intercourse

EFFECTIVENESS

When condoms are used consistently and correctly, the rate of unintended pregnancy is 2 in 100 women per year. Due to errors in use and inconsistent use of condoms, typically 15 out of 100 women actually have an unintended pregnancy. More protection against pregnancy is possible when condoms are used in conjunction with spermicide. Check the expiration date and store where not exposed to extreme heat.

SIDE EFFECTS

- no side effects except for people who are allergic to latex (rubber)
- the one to two percent of women and men who have such allergies can use a plastic vinyl or “skin” male or female condom instead.

Barriers for protection against disease during oral sex may be a dental dam (rubber square used by dentists), a condom cut into the shape of a barrier or saran wrap (plastic food wrap) folded double. The barrier is held tightly in place to prevent secretions from penetrating skin.

To make a barrier from a condom, while still rolled up cut the tip off the condom. While still rolled up, cut the condom. Unroll condom and you have a rectangular sheet of latex (rubber). Cover the genital area with cut condom during oral sex.

SPERMICIDES:

HOW SPERMICIDES WORK

Spermicides block the entrance to the uterus and immobilize sperm to prevent the sperm from joining with the egg. Spermicides provide no protection against sexually transmitted infections. Condoms used in conjunction with spermicides can reduce the risk of infection.

ADVANTAGES

- most women can use spermicides, but spermicides should not be used many times a day. If a woman is sensitive to a spermicide, she should try a different brand

DISADVANTAGES

- if not used exactly as directed, spermicides may not form a good barrier over the cervix
- some women complain of messiness or leakage
- spermicides may irritate the penis or vagina-switching brands may be helpful

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE

Detailed instructions for use of spermicide products (contractive foams, creams, jellies, or suppositories) are included with the packaging. Most require waiting 10 minutes after insertion before intercourse can begin. Most products only remain effective for one hour after insertion. Most spermicides must be reinserted before vaginal intercourse is repeated. Women should not douche for six to eight hours after intercourse.

EFFECTIVENESS

Of 100 women using spermicides, 29 will become pregnant in the first year of typical use. With perfect use, 15 will become pregnant. Using a condom increases the effectiveness.

CONTRAINDICATIONS

- using the spermicide nonoxynol-9 many times a day by people at risk for HIV, or for anal sex, may irritate tissues and increase the risk of HIV and other STIs.