

Correct Use of Condoms

A condom acts like a barrier or wall to keep semen, fluid from the vagina, and blood from passing from one person to the other during sex. These fluids can carry germs. If no condom is used, the germs can pass from the infected person to the uninfected person. Use of a condom also prevents unwanted pregnancies by keeping sperm out of the vagina.

Other good reasons to use condoms:

- They are cheap.
- They are easy to get (you don't need a prescription to buy them).
- They rarely have side effects.
- They are easy to use.

Some people have excuses for not using condoms, such as they are not comfortable, they lessen their enjoyment of sex, or they are unnatural. However, using a condom can make sex more enjoyable because both partners are more relaxed and secure. Besides, the risks involved with not using condoms make any excuses seem pretty weak.

When buying condoms, be sure the ones you choose:

- are latex—some condoms are made of natural membranes (lambskin) and not latex. Only latex condoms have been proved to work against STDs because they prevent the passage of harmful germs.
- have a reservoir (nipple) at the tip to catch semen.
- are lubricated with nonoxynol-9, which is a spermicide (chemical) that has been proved to give additional protection against STDs, including the AIDS virus.

Condoms do not make sex 100 percent safe, but if used properly, they will reduce the risk of STDs, including AIDS. Know the facts so that you can protect yourself and others from getting infected. Not having sex is the safest. However, if you are having sex, be sure to always use a latex condom. It is the best way for you and your partner to stay healthy.