

# Condom (External)

## What is a condom?

A condom is a thin covering that fits over a hard penis. It decreases the risk of pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) by stopping sperm and body fluids from passing between partners. Condoms can be used for oral, vaginal, or anal sex.

## How well does a condom work?

- With typical use (this means not following the exact directions) a condom is **82%** effective at preventing pregnancy.
- With perfect use (this means following the exact directions all the time) a condom is **98%** effective at preventing pregnancy.
- Condoms used with other forms of birth control give the best protection from pregnancy.
- Condoms will help prevent pregnancy, STIs, and HIV.

## How do I use a condom?

- Put a condom on **before** you have any sexual contact. Use a new condom every time you have sex.
- Never use 2 external condoms together or an external and internal condom together. It increases the risk of both condoms breaking.
- Never reuse condoms. Store them at room temperature and out of direct sunlight.
- Most condoms are lubricated. This helps prevent breakage and can increase feeling. If you want more lubrication, use water- or silicone-based lubricant (read the product label) on the penis, condom, or sex toy. Don't use oil products (e.g., body lotion, petroleum jelly) with a latex condom—it will break.
- Anyone can buy condoms. Many sexual health clinics give out condoms for no cost.
- Latex condoms may provide better protection than non-latex condoms (e.g., polyurethane) because there's a higher chance of non-latex condoms breaking or slipping off. However, non-latex condoms are still a good option for people who have a latex allergy.

## How do I put on a condom?

1. Check the expiry date (don't use if expired). Squeeze the package to make sure it's sealed—no air should come out.
2. Push the condom to one end of the package. Open carefully at the other end. Don't use scissors, fingernails, or teeth as you might damage the condom (see Figure 1).



Figure 1



3. Pinch the tip of the condom to squeeze out the air (see Figure 2).
4. Put the condom on the end of the hard penis (see Figure 3). If uncircumcised, pull back the foreskin.
5. Unroll the condom all the way down the base of the penis (see Figure 4).
6. After you ejaculate (cum) and the penis is still hard, hold onto the condom and pull out. Make sure to do this before the penis gets soft.
7. Throw the used condom in the garbage—don't flush it down the toilet.



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4

### What if a condom breaks?

- If a condom breaks or is left inside the vagina, get **emergency contraception as soon as possible** to help prevent pregnancy. Think about keeping an extra pack of emergency contraceptive pills at home.
- Think about getting tested for STIs.

### Did you know?

- You have the right to decide to have sex or not. Talk with your partner(s) about consent.
- There is an 85% chance of becoming pregnant within one year, if no birth control is used for vaginal sex.
- Use a condom every time you have sex (oral, vaginal, anal). Condoms help prevent pregnancy, STIs and HIV.
- You can lower your risk of HIV by taking an HIV prevention pill every day. Many Albertans can get it for free. Visit [www.prepalberta.ca](http://www.prepalberta.ca) to find out more.
- Transgender and gender diverse people who have a uterus can use hormonal birth control. It can help prevent pregnancy and make periods lighter and less painful.

### Websites

- [ahs.ca/srh](http://ahs.ca/srh)
- [ReadyorNotAlberta.ca](http://ReadyorNotAlberta.ca)
- [TeachingSexualHealth.ca](http://TeachingSexualHealth.ca)
- [myhealth.alberta.ca](http://myhealth.alberta.ca)
- [sexandu.ca](http://sexandu.ca)

For 24/7 nurse advice and general health information, call Health Link at 811.



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