

#### What is the female condom?

The female condom is a plastic tube with a flexible ring at each end to help it stay in place in the vagina. It is coated inside and outside with a lubricant.

#### How effective is the female condom?

If always used correctly, 5 out of 100 women will get pregnant each year using female condoms. If female condoms are not always used correctly, 21 out of 100 women will get pregnant each year.

#### How does it work?

The female condom keeps sperm from entering the vagina.

Important things to remember when using the female condom:

- The ring at the closed end is inserted into your vagina. This holds the tube in place against the cervix.
- The ring at the open end stays outside of your vagina during sex. The penis enters the vagina through the open end of the female condom.
- The female condom can be put in up to 8 hours before sex.
- After sex, you should take the condom out right away and throw it out. Each female condom can only be used one time.
- Female condoms can also be used for anal sex.
- Don't use female condoms and male condoms together because they can stick to each other and cause tearing.
- If the condom rips or falls out of your vagina, you should take emergency contraception as soon as possible within five days.

#### What are the benefits of using the female condom?

- The female condom is safe, simple, and convenient.
- Anyone can buy female condoms in a store without a prescription.
- You can insert it ahead of time or as part of sex play.
- The female condom is the only birth control method controlled by the woman that also protects against most sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

#### What are the downsides of using the female condom?

- You must use the female condom each time you have sex.
- The female condom is less effective at preventing pregnancy than some other birth control methods.
- Both partners will be able to see and feel the female condom and must be in agreement about using this method.
- The female condom can cause irritation of the vagina, vulva, penis, or anus.

- The female condom is more expensive than a male condom (about 4 times).
- The female condom can make sex noisy, but adding extra lubricant can help.

### **Where can I get the female condom?**

You can buy the female condom at drugstores, in some supermarkets, online, and at family planning clinics.

### **Where can I get more information?**

For more information on the female condom, talk to your health care provider.

Compare the female condom to other birth control options using ARHP's Method Match at [www.arhp.org/MethodMatch](http://www.arhp.org/MethodMatch).