

What is the condom?

The condom is a thin cover that fits snugly over the penis during sex.

How effective is the condom?

Like all birth control methods, condoms work better to prevent pregnancy when you use them correctly. If condoms are always used correctly, 2 out of 100 women will get pregnant each year. If condoms are not always used correctly, 15 out of 100 women will get pregnant each year.

How does it work?

The condom is a barrier. It keeps sperm from entering the vagina.

Important things to remember when using a condom:

- Put the rolled-up condom on the tip of an erect penis.
- Unroll it over the penis while holding on to the small pouch at the condom's tip. It is important to keep a small amount of space for the semen to collect between the end of the penis and the tip of the condom.
- Make sure to take the penis out of the vagina when it is still erect so that no semen leaks out into the vagina.
- Also, when taking the erect penis out of the vagina after sex, the condom should be held at the base of the penis to keep semen from leaking out of the condom.
- The condom should be thrown away after one use.
- Condoms with spermicide are not recommended. They can increase the risk of sexually transmitted infections (STIs).
- If the condom tears or rolls off inside the vagina, the woman should take emergency contraception as soon as possible within five days.

What are the benefits of using the condom?

- A condom made of latex, silicone, or other synthetic material protects against most sexually transmitted infections (STIs).
- Condoms are safe, simple, and convenient.
- Anyone can buy condoms in a store without a prescription.

What are the downsides of using the condom?

- You must use a condom each time you have sex.
- Condoms are not as effective at preventing pregnancy as some other birth control methods.
- Using condoms requires cooperation from the male partner.
- Latex condoms can cause irritation in people that are allergic to latex.

Where can I get the condom?

You can buy condoms at drugstores, in some supermarkets, and at family planning clinics. Sometimes, condoms are sold in vending machines in public restrooms. Many clinics will give you free condoms.

Where can I get more information?

For more information on condoms, talk to your health care provider.

Compare condoms to other birth control options using ARHP's Method Match at www.arhp.org/MethodMatch.