

Condoms 101 - An Overview (What you May have Missed in School)

Basically stated, a condom is a form of birth control that prevents the passage of semen from reaching the vaginal canal during sexual intercourse. In addition to this, a condom also prevents blood, vaginal secretions and other bodily fluids from passing between sexual partners. Acting as a barrier for these fluids allows for a condom to aid in the prevention of pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases and HIV.

There are three basic types of condoms available on the market: male, female and dental dam. The male condom is available in latex, polyurethane and lambskin. There are several different manufacturers of the male condom. At the present time, there is only one version of the female condom on the market. It is manufactured under the trademarked name Reality and is made of polyurethane. The third product is something called dental dam, or oral dam. This protects partners from receiving vaginal secretions during oral sex activity.

The most popular material used to manufacture a condom is latex. As it has shown through research to be a highly effective prevention method against the transmission of bodily fluids that may result in either partner contracting a sexually transmitted disease or HIV. Each of the main condom manufacturers offer a wide variety of latex condoms to select from. If lubrication is desired, a latex condom must be paired with a water based lubricant in order to maintain its effectiveness. Both the male condom and dental dam are available in latex form.

For those with a rare latex allergy, another condom option is available in polyurethane. This material creates a much thinner and slightly stronger condom than its latex counterpart. Studies have shown that polyurethane condoms provide a slightly higher level of sensitivity in use. There is also a better fit and reduced deterioration over time presented. As of yet, there have been no specific studies centered on a polyurethane condom in the areas of STD and HIV prevention. It can be used with an oil based lubricant if desired.

The female condom is manufactured entirely in polyurethane. As such, it provides sexual partners with protection from a sexually transmitted disease or HIV. A silicone based lubricant is built into the design of the condom. Extra lubrication is left up to the discretion of sexual partners. A female condom should not be used with a male condom during sexual activity. There is the possibility of the two materials rubbing together. This could result in a tear or misplacement in one or both condoms, thus lessening the effective level of each.

When used correctly a condom is 98% effective in the prevention of pregnancy. Research has indicated that choosing to use a condom during sexual activity greatly reduces a person's risk of contracting HIV more so than not using one at all. A condom also provides protection against STD's such as Chlamydia or gonorrhea. There is no need for a prescription or doctor visit before hand. Condoms are readily available in most grocery stores, online retail outlets and drug stores at inexpensive prices. This makes a condom the easiest form of birth control on the market.

For more information visit: [Condoms 101 - An Overview \(What you May have Missed in School\)](#)

About the Author

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