

Condom Use

What is a condom? It is a thin piece of shaped latex that is placed over the penis as a barrier method of contraception and disease prevention.

What else are condoms called? Sometimes they are called rubbers, prophylactics, safes, or jimmies.

How effective is it? There is not a prophylactic or contraceptive that can guarantee 100% effectiveness; however, if used properly, latex condoms, will help reduce the risk of transmission of HIV infection (AIDS) and many other sexually transmitted infections, including genital herpes, chlamydia, genital warts, gonorrhea, hepatitis B, and syphilis.

How to take care of a condom.

- Condoms should be handled gently and stored in a cool, dry place.
- Long exposure to air, heat, and light makes them more breakable.
- Do not keep them for a long amount of time in a back pocket, wallet, or glove compartment.

How do I use a condom?

- Open the package carefully and take out the condom.
- When the penis is hard, place the condom on the tip and roll it down all the way. (This should be done before **any** sexual contact.) Make sure to leave space at the tip.
- Once the condom is unrolled, be sure to squeeze the tip gently so that no air is trapped inside.
- After ejaculation, withdraw the penis while it is still hard; make sure to hold on to the rim of the condom so that nothing spills.
- Condoms **can not** be used again, so make sure to throw it away.

Are there any side effects? Most men and women do not have problems using condoms, although some side effects can occasionally occur. These include an allergy to latex condoms or irritation of the penis or the vagina from spermicides or lubricants that are on the condoms.

Remember: If you decide that you are going to have sex, it is important that you use a condom **every** time to prevent the spread of disease.

Also remember: Abstinence is still the only 100% effective way to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections.

For more information, talk to your doctor or nurse, or call the Children's Mercy Hospital Information Line at (816) 234-3188.