

## What Is It?

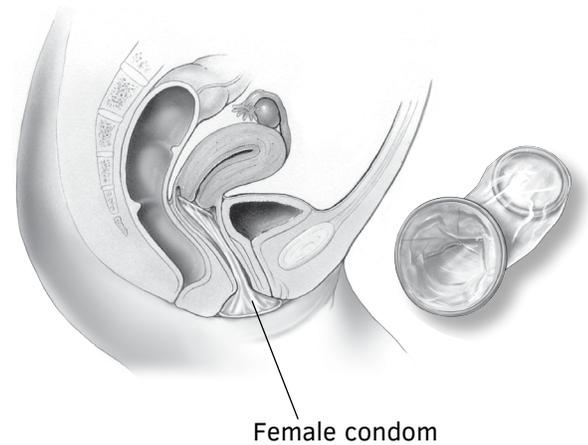
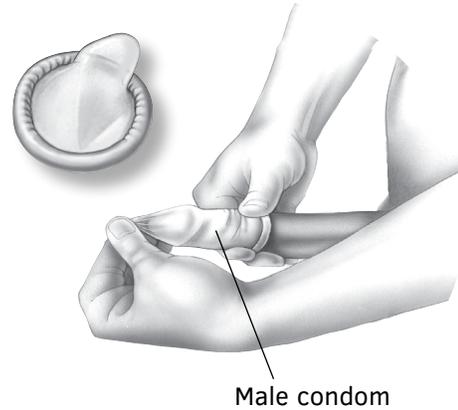
A male condom is a thin sheath made of latex (rubber), polyurethane (plastic), or natural (animal) membrane that is worn by the man over his erect penis. A female condom is a thin plastic pouch that lines the vagina. It sometimes is called an internal condom. It is held in place by a closed inner ring at the cervix and an outer ring at the opening of the vagina.

## How Does It Work?

A condom acts as a physical barrier that prevents sperm from entering the uterus and fertilizing an egg. Both types are more effective in preventing pregnancy when used with a spermicide. You should not use a spermicide if you are at high risk of HIV infection.

## How Do I Use It?

- **Male condom:** Place the rolled-up condom over the tip of the erect penis. Hold the end of the condom to allow a little extra space at the tip. Then unroll the condom over the penis. Right after ejaculation, grasp the condom around the base of the penis as it is withdrawn. Throw the condom away.
- **Female condom:** Squeeze the inner ring between your fingers and insert it into the vagina as far as possible. Push the inner ring up to the cervix, just behind the pubic bone. About an inch of the open end should be outside your body. Right after ejaculation, twist the outer ring closed, and pull the pouch out gently. Throw the condom away.
- Do not use a male and female condom together. Use a lubricant to help prevent the condom from tearing or breaking and to reduce irritation. Use only water-based or silicone lubricants with latex condoms.



## Benefits

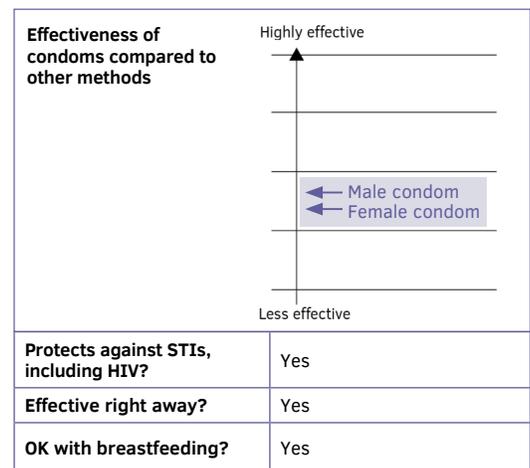
- Condoms can be bought over the counter and can be carried in a pocket or purse.
- They have no effect on a woman's natural hormones.
- They can be used while breastfeeding.
- Latex and polyurethane condoms provide the best available protection against STIs. Natural membrane condoms do not protect against STIs or HIV as effectively as those made of latex and polyurethane.
- The female condom can be inserted up to 8 hours before sex.

## Risks

There are no risks to using condoms when used as instructed.

## Possible Side Effect

Allergic reaction to latex or polyurethane



\*Abbreviations: HIV, human immunodeficiency virus; STIs, sexually transmitted infections.