

## EXTERNAL CONDOM

### What is the external condom?

The external condom is a thin pouch that is usually made of latex (rubber) and also available in polyurethane (plastic) or polyisoprene (synthetic rubber). You put it on an erect (stiff) penis or sex toy before it enters the vagina, mouth or anus during sex.

### How effective is the external condom?

External condoms are 98% effective at preventing pregnancy if used correctly, every time you have sex. Given mistakes might happen, such as incorrect use, slippage or breakage, external condoms might only be 88% effective.

### How does the external condom work?

The external condom works by preventing ejaculate (cum) from the penis entering the vagina, mouth or anus. The external condom can prevent both pregnancy and sexually transmissible infections (STIs). Use a new external condom every time you have sex.

### How do I use the external condom?

Check the expiry date before use. Squeeze the tip of the external condom to remove air, then roll it down on the erect penis or sex toy as far as it will go.

Each external condom can only be used once and then be thrown away into a bin (not down the toilet). To prevent pregnancy and sexually transmissible infections (STIs), the external condom should be put on before the penis touches the vagina, mouth or anus.

External condoms can be used with water-based or silicone-based lubricants (lube). Lube is a jelly or liquid like material. Oil-based lube cannot be used with latex external condoms, as it can damage latex, increasing the risk of pregnancy or STIs. Check the lube product label before using.

### Where can I get the external condom?

External condoms and lube are available from supermarkets, pharmacies/chemists and petrol stations. Some clinics, youth services and community health services provide them for free.

### What stops the external condom from working?

External condoms might not work if they are:

- used incorrectly
- used with oil-based lubricant
- past their expiry date
- used at the same time as certain vaginal medications (check with your doctor, nurse or pharmacist)
- the wrong size for the penis
- torn when opening packet
- kept in hot places for a long time (like a car glove box in summer).

### What is good about the external condom?

- Protects against sexually transmissible infections (STIs).
- Low cost or free.
- Easy to use.
- Little or no side effects.
- Can be bought without a script.
- Available in different sizes.

### Are there any side effects from taking the external condom?

They can occasionally cause irritation of the vagina, penis or anus.

### Can the external condom cause any serious health problems?

Some people are allergic to latex. Non-latex external condoms are available.

### Reasons why the external condom might not be a good option:

You or your partner have difficulty keeping an erection.

#### Disclaimer

*This factsheet is for general information purposes only and should not be relied on as medical information. You should seek specific medical consultation for your individual circumstances.*

**What if I had sex without using an external condom?**

If you or your partner do not want to get pregnant, you might need emergency contraception, if you had sex without using an external condom or other contraception (check with your doctor, nurse or pharmacist).

**Can I use external condoms after I have had a baby?**

You can use external condoms any time after giving birth.

**What else should I know about the external condom?**

Wrap used external condoms in tissue and throw away safely. Do not flush external condoms down the toilet.

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