

## Contraception – Male condom

The main purpose of contraception (or birth control) is to prevent an unplanned pregnancy. You should know and understand the different types of methods available to you, the risks and benefits of each, and any possible side effects, so that both you and your partner can be able to make an informed choice. Contraception can be broadly divided into:

1. Temporary or permanent methods - permanent birth control is accomplished through sterilization (tying or removal of the fallopian tubes) or hysterectomy (removal of womb / uterus). The rest of the methods are classified as temporary or reversible.
2. Short term or long-term methods – short term methods are condoms and oral pills. Long term methods are injectables, intrauterine device and hormonal implants.

The condom is a sheath that looks like a small, elongated balloon and is usually made of thin latex rubber, polyurethane or natural membranes. The man wears this sheath over the erect penis during intercourse. The sheath will prevent the sperm from being deposited in the vagina following ejaculation. The condom may also be effective in preventing spread of some sexually transmitted infections (STIs) such as human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), chlamydia, gonorrhoea, genital warts etc. It is the only form of temporary birth control available for men.

### Advantages

- Generally effective for contraceptive use (88-98%), provided it is used in a proper and consistent way.
- It is readily available, inexpensive, and easy to use. Women can buy and carry condoms.
- No medical consultation is required to start using it. It can be purchased easily and widely available.
- It provides good protection against some STIs.
- There are no systemic side effects from condom use.
- Since the condom prevents the deposition of semen in the vagina, the woman will have less leaking (discharge) following intercourse.

### Disadvantages

- There is a need for the condom to be available and the extra time and effort required to put it on prior to intercourse. This may decrease the spontaneity of sex for some couples.
- It may lessen the woman or male's sensation since the penis does not touch the vaginal walls directly.
- It may irritate the woman's vagina due to the friction from the condom. The lubricant may or may not help in relieving it.
- Some women or men can be allergic to the material used to manufacture the condom.
- Condom may break or leak, resulting in unplanned pregnancy

### General instructions for use

- There are many brands of condoms and you should try to find the best fit for you. You should check the expiry date before using it. Be careful when opening the condom packet. You should not use teeth, sharp fingernails, scissors, or other sharp instruments

to open it as these may damage the condom. Push the condom to one side and gently tear along the corner or edge. It should be easy to open the pack.

- Once you remove the condom from the pack, check for defects such as holes, tears or if it feels unusual (stickiness), do not use it. Open another pack and repeat the steps above. You should not unroll the condom to check it because this could damage it and make it difficult to put it on.
- Use a new condom for every act of intercourse. Put the condom on after the penis is erect and before any contact is made between the penis and any part of the partner's body.
- If using a spermicide, put some inside the condom tip.
- The teat end should be pointing up and you should always pinch the tip enough to leave a small space for semen to collect when you start rolling the rim of the condom over the penis until the base. The pinching will make sure to eliminate any air in the tip to help keep the condom from breaking.
- If you are using water-based lubricant, you may put more on the outside of the condom.
- After ejaculation and before the penis gets soft, hold the rim of the condom, and carefully withdraw the penis.
- To remove the condom, gently pull it off the penis and make sure the semen does not spill out.
- Dispose it in a proper way. Because condoms may cause problems in sewers, do not flush it down the toilet.
- If the condom breaks, there is a chance you can become pregnant. You should consider taking emergency contraception or see your doctor immediately for advice. You should also get tested for STIs if you are not sure of your partner's infective status.

#### Disclaimer

This is for informational purposes only and is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. It is important for readers to seek proper medical advice when necessary.

Dr Lee Say Fatt (Consultant Obstetrician and Gynaecologist)  
Subang Jaya Medical Centre  
November 2020  
[www.obgyn.com.my](http://www.obgyn.com.my)