

THE CONDOM

For Years
you've heard
people say,

"Use a condom every time
you have sex." You may
think that condoms make sex
safe, but research shows that's
not the case. **Condoms used to
prevent pregnancy fail in about 15%
of couples during the first year of
use.¹** And even if used every time you
have sex, **condoms just reduce your risk
of getting a sexually transmitted infection
(STI); they don't eliminate it.**

THE TRUTH IS, even if you use a condom
every time you have sex, you're still at risk
for both pregnancy and STIs. **How serious
is your risk?**

Keep reading.



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THE CONDOM

Do Condoms
Make Sex Safe?



THE TRUTH IS, even if you use a
condom every time you have sex,
you're still putting yourself at risk.

Each Year, THERE ARE ABOUT 20 MILLION NEW INFECTIONS; HALF OF THESE ARE IN PEOPLE UNDER 25.² SOME OF THESE STIs ARE TREATABLE, BUT MANY HAVE NO CURE. UNTREATED STIs CAN CAUSE INFERTILITY, CANCER AND EVEN DEATH.

ORAL SEX & CONDOMS

STIs, including HIV, herpes, syphilis, gonorrhea, HPV, hepatitis A or B and parasites can be transmitted by oral sex.³ There are very few studies regarding risk reduction by consistent use of condoms during oral sex. The leading cause of cancer in the oropharynx (middle part of the throat, base of the tongue and tonsils) is caused from a virus (HPV) that can be spread by oral sex.⁴

ANAL SEX & CONDOMS

Anal intercourse may occur between same sex or opposite sex couples. The receptive partner (the person receiving the penis in the anus) is at a very high risk for getting HIV or other infections if their partner is infected.⁵ The male condom is less effective in preventing infection with anal intercourse than it is with vaginal intercourse.⁶ Female condoms or internal condoms have not been proven effective with anal intercourse.⁷ Doubling up on condoms is less safe than using a single condom.⁸

GENITAL HERPES

If you use condoms correctly every time you have vaginal sex, you can cut your chance of getting genital herpes by about 30%.⁹ Genital herpes infects 1 out of 6 teens and adults.¹⁰ Once you're infected, you have it for life. Sores can keep coming back for many years, especially if you don't stay on medication. Even if you have no symptoms, you can still spread the infection to others. People with herpes are also at greater risk for becoming infected with HIV.¹¹

CHLAMYDIA AND GONORRHEA

If you use condoms correctly every time you have vaginal sex, you can cut your chance of getting chlamydia or gonorrhea by almost 60%.¹² Chlamydia is the most commonly reported STI. Most people with chlamydia or gonorrhea have no symptoms. Even without symptoms you can pass on these infections. If left untreated, both chlamydia and gonorrhea can cause pelvic inflammatory disease (PID). PID can cause longterm pelvic pain and can interfere with your ability to get pregnant.¹³

HIV/AIDS

If you use condoms correctly every time you have vaginal sex, you can cut your chance of getting HIV by about 80%.¹⁴ Men having anal sex with men who use condoms correctly every time can cut their chance of getting HIV by about 70%.⁶ That might sound pretty good, but that still leaves you at risk for infection. Almost 1 in 7 HIV infected people are unaware that they are HIV positive. In 2017 there were almost 39 thousand new cases of HIV diagnosed in the U.S. In 2016, there were over 15,000 deaths among HIV positive Americans.

SKIN TO SKIN TRANSMISSION

Some STIs, including Human Papillomavirus, syphilis, and genital herpes can be passed from the infected skin of one person to an uninfected person. Condoms are not designed to cover all of the skin of the genital area. Even if the skin appears to be normal, it can be infected with a virus or bacteria.

The Bottom Line

Condoms don't make sex safe. Although condoms can reduce your risk for some STIs, they don't eliminate it. You can still get an STI or get pregnant. Even when condoms are used correctly and consistently, they do not offer complete protection.

Waiting to have sex until you are in a faithful, lifelong relationship (such as marriage) with an uninfected partner is the only certain way to avoid being infected sexually.

