



Dear Dr. Myrtle,

I want to protect myself, but it seems weird or geeky to whip out some latex. How can I make using condoms more fun?

*Five pleasurable reasons to use barriers:*

**Be the God(dess) Within.** Be proud of yourself for caring for your body. No one can do it as well as you can. As interested as other people seem in your body, sexuality, and life, *no one cares about your body as much as you do.*

**Perfect practice makes perfect sexual experiences.** Studies show that those who know how to use barriers correctly and provide their own supply are more likely to have successful use. Know how to use them yourself, and you won't have to rely on someone else to keep you safe. (Finally, being a good Girl/Boy Scout pays off! Be the first on your block to have one!)



**Condoms and other barriers (such as gloves and dams) allow people to explore their sexuality more safely.** Barriers allow you to feel pleasurable sensations, but prevent direct contact with potentially infectious secretions. If you're thinking or deciding to be sexual with someone else, then choosing the right barriers for your sexual play makes sense. Barriers don't make you have sex—your choices do that. Barriers simply help you to protect your health if you pursue sexual activities with other people.

**Barriers help prevent sexually transmitted infections (STIs).** Common infections include curable ones like Chlamydia (*clah-MID-de-yah*) and Gonorrhea (*gahn-oh-REE-yah*), as well as incurable ones like Herpes and HPV (Human Papilloma Virus). Using barriers consistently and correctly *reduces* transmission of these infections.

**Wondering whether you should have used a barrier can ruin an otherwise excellent sexual experience.** Increase your pleasure—protect yourself from the start. Don't let passionate experiences dissolve into worry and anxiety.

## GENERAL BARRIER INFORMATION

**Latex, nitrile, and polyurethane condoms are effective at preventing pregnancy and the spread of STIs.** When you put a small amount of lubricant on either side of the barrier, the moisture makes the barrier feel as though it's hardly present, and allows for heat and pressure to glide right through to your nerve endings. This allows you to experience pleasure with less worry of contacting infections.

Some barriers are made of latex rubber, a stretchy and strong material. For those with latex allergies, there are several types of non-latex condoms available. These are made of polyurethane (*Trojan Supra*), nitrile (*Female Condom*), or polyisoprene (*Skyn*). Polyurethane condoms *can* break more frequently (2.6%-5%) than latex condoms (3%), although it's a pretty small difference. Since they're not as stretchy, polyurethane condoms may slip off of a penis more easily, and should be held in place with a stretchy erection ring for more security.

**Is there enough lube already on the barrier?** Most condoms are lightly lubricated with a silicone-based lubricant, but a few are lubricated with a water-based lubricant or not at all. If you're using silicone, rubber, or Cyberskin toys, you'll want to use **unlubricated** condoms, since silicone lubricants damage soft toys. We recommend adding your *own* lubricant even to *pre*-lubricated condoms—most don't have enough lube on them to keep them from breaking.

**AVOID** condoms with spermicide. Most spermicides contain nonoxynol-9, a detergent that has proven very irritating to sensitive genital tissue. Spermicides kill sperm, but can increase the chance of contracting an STI by hurting the skin barrier.

**AVOID** lambskin condoms. Lambskin condoms are only effective at preventing contraception, not STI transmission. Lambskin condoms are porous, with pores small enough to block sperm, but big enough to allow bacteria, viruses, or other microbes to pass through freely.

## TYPES OF BARRIERS

### MALE CONDOMS

**Male condoms can be worn on a penis, or used to cover dildos or other toys.**

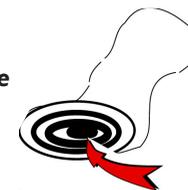
Male condoms come in all different sizes, textures, flavors, and colors. With so many options, it can be fun to experiment with different types and figure out which you like best. Some couples choose different condoms at different times depending on the sensual mood they are in. See our condom chart (last page) for details about the different condoms available through **A Woman's Touch**.



### FEMALE CONDOMS

**The Female Condom (FC2) is a fantastic nitrile pouch that fits inside of a vagina or rectum, and despite the name, they can be worn by people of any gender.**

Instead of putting something over the "Outie" (penis or dildo), imagine covering the surface of the "Innie" being penetrated instead. This shakes up the whole "who wears a condom" controversy, and potentially allows advanced strides in pleasure, sensation, heat and sexual comfort.



**Female condoms are very comfortable to wear.**

Female condoms don't move during sex, so the rubbing happens on the surface of the condom instead of on the skin. This means there is a lot less friction against the receiving partner's skin. When asked about preferences and comfort, FC2's are preferred by women who test both types and use them consistently. For people experimenting with anal penetration, the reduction in friction against the delicate anal canal is worth the effort.

**How do they work?** When worn vaginally, they stay in place with a flexible ring on the inside, meant to fit snugly against the cervix, and another on the outside, meant to rest against the vulva. For anal use, simply remove the inner ring before inserting, and keep the outer ring outside of the wearer's body.

**Do they work?** Female condoms are *less* likely to break than male condoms (0.1% vs 3.1%). If you have more questions about female condoms, the package insert has

some great info and pictures.

**Advanced FC2 practice tips:** Since the penetrating partner isn't wearing protection, it's important to make sure the penis stays *inside* of the outer ring during insertion and thrusting. Play "Bulls Eye" to be sure you get it right—everyone loves a good aim.

Also, since the outer loop is expanded to cover some of the opening, thrusting can make a subtle crinkly noise. We say this is an opportunity to strike up the band, and get your groove on while you groove on.

### GLOVES

Gloves are made of latex or nitrile (safe for people with latex allergies), and come in different sizes and colors. Gloves protect you while you explore manual stimulation ("hand jobs") or fisting. Plus, with a bit of lube, gloves become slippery, sexy tools of pleasure that glide oh-so-smoothly over the skin.

**Avoid finger cots.** We don't recommend them. First of all, they only protect your finger. So what happens if you have a cut on your palm? Second of all, they can slip off easily. It's far easier to wear a glove, plus it gives you more surface area to touch with!

### ORAL SEX DAMS

Oral sex dams are thin, silky-smooth sheets of latex or polyurethane designed to make oral-vaginal or oral-anal contact safe and pleasurable for both partners. Put some lubricant on the area to be licked, lay the sex dam gently on top of the skin (don't stretch), then lick away. One trick to hold it in place without hands is to get a garter belt, and use the garter ends to hold it in place. Tasty *and* fashionable.

Oral Sex Dams, like those made by *Glyde*, are twice as large and half as thick as regular dental dams, making them better suited for oral play. In a pinch, plastic wrap—the non-microwaveable kind only—works just as well (really!).

### DON'T FORGET THE LUBE!

We consider lube to be one of the greatest sex toys ever invented. Not only is it a lot of fun to use, it also helps prevent barriers from breaking. What more could you ask for? For more information about the types of lubricants available, see our **AWT Personal Lubricants** brochure.



*But You Think You Can't Use Barriers Because...*

#### **A. Social embarrassment.**

Sex doesn't "just happen." Pretending that you aren't preparing for being sexual doesn't mean that you aren't actually doing so. Really—don't you fill up a car with gas before you drive it? Don't you buy groceries before you cook a fabulous meal? People who are skilled and prepared by having condoms and lube with them have much more successful experiences with barriers.

If a sexual partner asks why you're getting your barriers and lube out, just tell them that you're still working on one of your scout badges. If they're worth your attention, they'll be even more impressed. (If they really give you a hard time, see 'E' and 'F').

#### **B. Using barriers means you're "too sexual".**

Is it really better to fake ignorance and not have barriers than to appear as the sex god(dess) you are?

#### **C. I feel beyond awkward touching barrier products.**

Learning more about barriers (like you are now) helps reduce that weird feeling that you're doing something odd. How can you feel like a pro when you've never seen a barrier? It's not going to work by itself, just like a cell phone can't dial itself. Study up, become an expert at using barriers, and learn which barriers you prefer. Some exercises for becoming an expert:

1. Practice buying barriers and lube.
2. Practice taking them out of their packages.
3. Practice storing them somewhere convenient to your potential sexual play spots.
4. Smell how they smell. Taste how they taste.
5. Put them on yourself and wear them around. You can never be too prepared.
6. Put lube on them and see how well the heat and touch of your fingers comes through.
7. Self-pleasure with them.
8. Make them a part of your everyday life! Blow them up to decorate your next party. Make water balloons out of them. Give lube samples away as party

favorites! (Your friends will ask you a lot of questions about sex after *that* party.)

Most importantly, just begin.

#### **D. Can't afford barriers (prefer Russian Roulette)**

It is WAY more expensive to treat sexually transmitted infections than to prevent them. At over \$70 just to run ONE test for an infection (and that's just the test itself, not the collection, treatment, etc.), barriers are quite a deal. For \$70, you could buy condoms and lube for 70 sessions of raucous, rowdy sex! If you threw in the exam to get the sample (\$40) plus the medication to treat your Chlamydia infection (\$50), you just "spent" 160 sessions of sex, or sex every other day for a year!

Our suggestion is to protect yourself, and have sex every other day of the year if you want. If you don't have sex quite that frequently, you'll have extra spending money for those flavored condoms you've been eyeing.

#### **E. My partner won't have sex with me if I insist on using barriers.**

Then why are you having sex with them? Have sex with yourself, instead, or someone who respects you enough to play safely with you.

#### **F. My (male) partner won't wear a condom.**

Beware the awkward condom user. People who don't regularly use condoms are most likely to break them, which won't do either of you any good. Reconsider your plans, or perhaps *you* could wear a Female Condom, instead (remember, anyone of any gender can wear these for vaginal or anal penetration). Otherwise, see "E" above.

#### **Hints & Tips for Fun Barrier Play**

1. **Don't keep barriers with sharp items.** It sounds funny until your nail clippers give you Chlamydia! Store barriers in a cool place (out of the sun or light) in a puncture-resistant tote. You'll save on cleaning up all of that lube, too.
2. **Have extra lubricant handy.** Saliva will work in a pinch, but dries quickly. Sample packets can be tucked under pillows, or scattered around your usual trysting places.

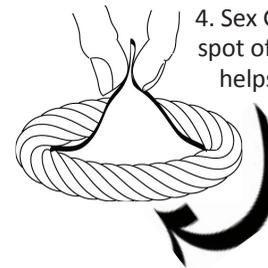
3. **Grab a flavored condom when you want both oral sex and penetrative sex.** The flavored condoms have some tasty lube on them which helps keep your mouth moist, and they work just fine for penetration.

4. When using latex condoms, keep in mind that **oils of any type, including oils found in moisturizing soaps and lipstick, break down latex.** So, for latex barriers, no oils, please. Water-based and silicone-based lubes were designed for pleasure, and they'll keep your latex products all in one piece.

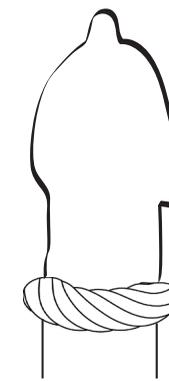
5. If you're intimate with a regular partner, **trade back and forth who wears the condom.** For example, some people use male condoms sometimes, and female condoms other times. The sensations are different for each type, and the responsibility is fun to pass around.

#### **TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL MALE CONDOM USE:**

1. Unwrap condom packages carefully; preferably not with your teeth. See #1 above.
2. Open your lube and get ready for masterful application. (Watch your partner's eyes dilate by slapping some on your own genitals—HOT!) *Not* using lube has been shown to increase the risk of condom slips (because it gets "tugged" off) or breaks.
3. When right side out, a male condom looks like a hat with a brim. Before you put it on, check to see that it looks like this so that it will roll on properly. If you put the condom/hat on inside out, throw it away. **Don't** flip it over—you can get pregnant or transmit infections just from that little flip.



4. Sex God(dess) Tip: Plop a dime-sized spot of lube inside the condom. This helps the condom slide over the head of the penis, and men report loving this silky sensation.
5. Gently squish the (lube-filled) tip as you press the condom against the head of the penis.
6. Gently unroll the brim of the condom down onto the shaft of the penis.



7. The middle part of the shaft is where male condoms most frequently break. Save your condom: slap a handful of lube on the shaft, then spread the lube around a bit with your hands. He'll think he died and went to heaven, and you'll both have a condom that stays put.
8. If using a condom becomes uncomfortable while you're being sexual, stop immediately.

Discomfort with condom usage means the condom is very likely to break. Penetration with a condom should feel comfortable to both of you. Check your lube levels, and consider a different size or type of condom.

For most people, condoms are more comfortable to wear when they are **not** stretched tightly. This is because a well-fitting condom has a little extra room to gently caress the wearer, which adds stimulation rather than dampening it. On the other hand, a loose condom can slip off, or cause discomfort for the person being penetrated (too much friction). Finding the right size, texture, thickness and snugness can make a vast difference in functional comfort. Choosing a condom that "fits snugly and comfortably" will function better in safety and pleasure than one worn too tightly.

9. Men who enjoy more sensation on the shaft of the penis might try the "nubs inside" condoms. (Our customer fave: **Beyond 7 Ribs & Dots**.) Or, try the **One Pleasure Dome** or **Magnum Ecstasy**, which have extra room around the head of the penis. This extra latex slips around, providing much more sensation where he can feel it.

10. Men can (should?) practice self-pleasuring with different condoms to figure out which ones they like best. Or, perhaps you would like to collect a selection of condoms and lubes for your male partner, then sit back and watch while he self-pleasures. Yes, watch. There is nothing more erotic than watching someone else pleasure themselves.

**THIN SCORE:** Choose a condom based on the **overall** features, not simply the thickness/thinness score.

1) AWT carries the strongest, thinnest condoms on the market, so even our thickest condoms are often thinner than most widely available condoms. Therefore, don't necessarily avoid a '3-4', as it may have other redeeming features that will meet your pleasure needs.

2) Thicker condoms may seem more durable, but studies show strength is not about thickness. What makes a stronger condom is the manner in which they are manufactured and tested, so very thin—and well made—condoms are safer for your use, and more pleasurable.

3) **Never** wear two condoms "for safety's sake." Two condoms are **less** effective than one good, lubricated condom, since two will rub against each other which dramatically increases the risk of breakage.

**FLAT WIDTH AND LENGTH:** The **best way** to use these numbers is to wear/use a condom **once**, decide whether you **liked** it, and vary your **choices** from there.

All condoms are made in different shapes and sizes, so we needed a way to compare them. The FLAT WIDTH and LENGTH collapsed flat states measurements are only for comparison, and do not indicate the condom's actual size. In terms of actual fit, the material (latex, nitrile, polyurethane, polyisoprene) determines for the amount of stretch.

**AWT** puts together some handy sample packs of condoms of different sizes, shapes and textures for you to take home and "test". More fun than you might imagine, actually, if you put your **mind** hand to it.

**CONTOURED:** Do *each of the lovers* prefer skin tight, or dome at the tip? The answer could be different, and you won't know until you ask. Some folks enjoy the sensation of a condom that hugs the penis, either because it increases the sensation for the person wearing it, or because it reduces the friction for the person being penetrated.

For others, a looser fit around the tip of the condom means more pleasurable sensation for the wearer—condoms with a "head pouch" shape allow more latex movement (and sensation) around the head of the penis. Too much "head pouch" condom fabric may increase friction uncomfortably for the person being penetrated, so testing is definitely advised.

AWT SKU	Name	Flat Width (cm)	Flat Length (cm)	Thin Score	Contoured	Extra Feature	Color
<b>LATEX</b>							
600733	Atlas BlackJack	5.1	21.5	1			black
600729	Atlas Pleasure Combo	5.3	21.3	1		package includes extra lube	clear
600772	Beyond 7	5.3	20.5	1, very thin			blue
600775	Beyond 7 Aloe Lube	5.4	20.2	1		aloe lube, not silicone lube	green
600773	Beyond 7 Studded	5.0	19.0	1		texture studs (out)	clear
600777	Crown	5.2	21.6	1			pink
600764	Durex Love	5.8	22.0	1	mild dome		clear
600124	Durex XXL	5.0	24.5	2, thinner			clear
600776	Kimono Maxx	5.3	21.5	1			clear
600784	Kimono Microthin	5.0	20.5	1			clear
600782	Kimono Micro Aqua Lube	5.0	21.3	1		aqua lube, not silicone lube	clear
600798	Kimono Microthin Large	5.4	21.7	1	mild dome		clear
600778	Kimono Textured (type E)	5.2	21.4	1	mild dome	studs (out)	green
600125	One The Legend	5.4	21.1	2			clear
700743	One Tantric Pleasures	6.3	21.0	1	dome head	fine texture pattern, outside	black
600126	One Pleasure Dome	5.0	21.6	2	large dome		clear
600010	Sir Richards Ultra Thin	5.0	20.7	1			clear
600011	Sir Richards XL	5.3	21.7	2			clear
600748	Trojan Magnum	6.0	21.5	3, thin			clear
600123	Trojan Magnum Ecstasy	5.3	21.7	3	mild dome	texture ribs on shaft	clear
600122	Trojan Magnum Thin	5.7	21.0	2			clear
600774	Trojan Magnum XL	6.2	21.7	3			clear
600797	Unlubricated condoms	5.1	21.5	1		unlubricated	clear
<b>NON-LATEX</b>							
600783	Trojan Supra Polyurethane	5.7	21.2	1		inflexible polyurethane	clear
600707	Skyn Polyisoprene	5.3	20.5	1		flexible polyisoprene	clear
600705	Skyn Large Polyisoprene	5.6	20.5	1	mild dome	flexible polyisoprene	clear
600721	Female Condom, nitrile	8.0	18.4	3		worn by receiving partner	clear

# Condoms & Barriers

your passport to enhanced sexual safety

~spruce up your (or someone else's) private parts in your favorite color OR flavor,

~explore new vistas and canyons, safely

~earn your sexual safety badge and impress your lovers

references: 1. J AM Coll Health (2005) Nov-Dec;54(3) 143; 2. Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med (2005) jun; 159(6):536; 3. Sex Transm Dis (2005) jan;32(1):35; 4. Contraception (2004) Nov;70(5):407; 5. Int J STD AIDS (2004) Jul;15(7):467; 6. Contraception (2003) Nov;68(5):319; 7. Contraception (2003) Jul;68(1):39; 8. J Am Med Womens Assoc (2003) spring; 58(2):95.

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