

## ***What Is A Condom?***

Condoms are worn for oral, anal, and vaginal sexual contact. It is a barrier method used to prevent pregnancy and/or to control the spread of disease. Condoms are made of either latex rubber, polyurethane, or animal membrane. Animal membrane condoms prevent pregnancy but have large enough pores through which tiny HIV and Hepatitis B virus particles can pass. They are not recommended for the prevention of STD infections. Latex condoms (and possibly polyurethane condoms) form a better barrier against HIV.

## ***Why Use Condoms With Spermicides?***

Using a spermicide AND a condom significantly reduces the chance of unwanted pregnancy. On most “spermicidally lubricated” condoms there is probably not enough spermicide to make much of a difference. If you want to increase the contraceptiveness of condoms you should use a separate spermicidal product such as foam, film, vaginal insert, or jelly. Spermicides are also beneficial in preventing infection with chlamydia or gonorrhea. Their role in prevention of HIV infection is controversial.

## **MALE CONDOMS**

### ***How Effective Are Male Condoms?***

Next to abstinence, condoms are the best protection against STD's, including HIV. When used properly, condoms are about 90% effective in preventing pregnancy and 95% effective if used with spermicide.

### ***Where Can You Get Male Condoms?***

You can purchase condoms at the Schiffert Health Center Pharmacy, off-campus pharmacies, convenience stores, grocery stores, etc.

### ***How To Avoid Male Condom Breakage?***

1. Petroleum products such as vaseline, hand lotions, sun tan oil, or bath oil can destroy latex condoms. Use only water base products for lubricating latex condoms. Oil based products do not break down polyurethane condoms.
2. Unlubricated condoms are more likely to break. Either use spermicidally lubricated condoms or one partner can use unlubricated condoms and the other partner can use some kind of water base spermicidal lubricant.
3. Use condoms with a reservoir at the tip to catch the semen and prevent breakage. Make sure the air is out of the condom as you roll it on since trapped air can cause breakage.
4. Heat destroys latex, so keep condoms in a cool place until you need them. (Carrying condoms around in a wallet for long periods of time or glove compartment can weaken the latex).
5. Buy condoms at a reputable store or pharmacy and make sure that the condom has not expired.
6. Never use condoms more than once.

\*\* One should never reapply a condom after it has been put on an erect penis inside out (i.e. when it won't roll down).

## **FEMALE CONDOMS**

### ***What Is A Female Condom?***

A female condom is a polyurethane device worn inside the vagina and covers some of outer parts of the female anatomy. It is inserted before intercourse occurs and can only be used once. If used inconsistently or incorrectly, the failure rate (for pregnancy) of the device is approximately 21%. If used properly with each and every sex act the estimated pregnancy failure rate is about 5%. Currently the only female condom approved for sale is called “Reality.” It is packaged with extensive instructions.

Women should practice inserting the female condom several times before usage and should make sure that their partners understand how the device works as well. SHC does not sell female condoms, but they are available at most local pharmacies in the condom section. The male & female condoms should **not** be used together at the same time.

## **SPERMICIDES**

### ***What Is A Spermicide?***

A spermicide is a chemical preparation that immobilizes and kills sperm. It comes in jellies, creams, foams, suppositories, film, and as a coating on condoms. There are several different chemical spermicides that can be purchased at any pharmacy.

### ***How Do You Use Spermicides?***

1. Read the directions for each form of spermicide. Directions may vary depending on the type of spermicide you use.
2. Spermicides and condoms should be used before any genital contact occurs. Pre-ejaculation fluid may contain sperm and disease causing organisms. Vaginal secretions may also contain STD causing organisms.
3. Most spermicides work best if applied just before intercourse.

### ***What Are The Advantages And Disadvantages Of Using A Condom With A Spermicide?***

#### **Advantages:**

1. Provides some protection against STD's
2. Effective contraception
3. No prescription necessary
4. Easy to use
5. Cost effective

#### **Disadvantages:**

1. Condom may slip off if left in place until erection subsides
2. Allergic reaction to spermicide may occur
3. Condom could break
4. May interfere with spontaneity

***Important Note!*** Douching pushes bacteria and sperm further into the vagina and does not prevent disease or pregnancy. In general, douching is unhealthy. For further information about douching, contact your health care provider.

#### ***Females - For Information Call:***

##### **SHC Women's Clinic**

McComas Hall

Monday through Friday, 8:30 - 11:30 am and 1:00 - 4:30 pm  
(540) 231-6569

#### ***Males - For Information Call:***

##### **Schiffert Health Center**

McComas Hall

Monday through Friday, 8:30 am - 5:00 pm  
(540) 231-5996/7642

##### **SHC World Wide Web Site**

<http://healthcenter.shs.vt.edu>