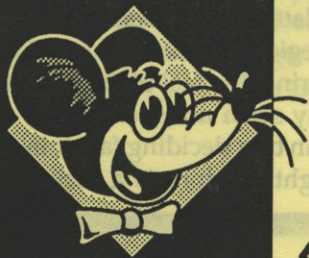
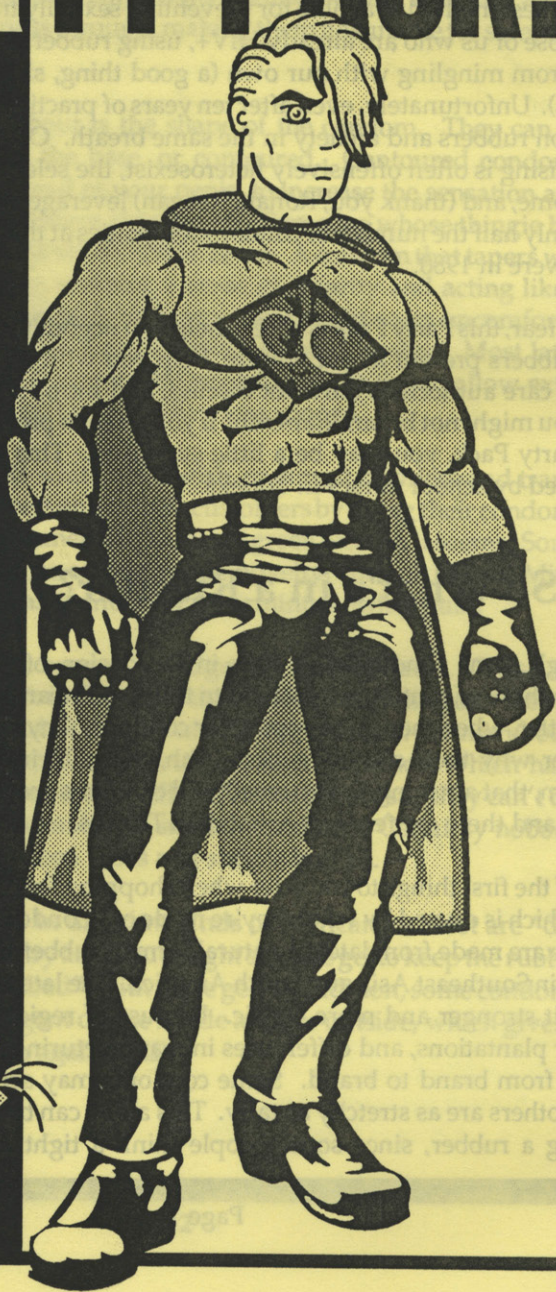


CAPTAIN CONDOM'S ORIGINAL

PARTY PACK!

***Your
Voyage
into the
Amazing
World
of
Condoms!***



1 . So You Want to Buy a Rubber!

Good for you! If you're going to be dipping the pen in the inkwell, condoms are the best method available for preventing sexually transmitted diseases. For those of us who are already HIV+, using rubbers keeps other people's bugs from mingling with our own (a good thing, since they like to swap stories). Unfortunately, even after ten years of practice, many gay men still mention rubbers and anxiety in the same breath. On top of that, condom advertising is often offensively heterosexual, the selection in some areas is gruesome, and (thank you, Ronald Reagan) leveraged buyouts have left us with only half the number of condom companies at the end of the decade as there were in 1980.

Never fear, this Party Pack is here to help you negotiate the confusing jungle that rubbers present in our culture, help you with some finer points that health care authorities dare not discuss, and introduce you some brands that you might not be familiar with. If you've seen previous incarnations of this Party Pack, you may be a little surprised. This version hasn't been censored by school nurses in Topeka.

2 . So What's in a Rubber?

Through some fundamental flaw in the design of the Universe, when people think of condoms they tend to think of Trojans. If they don't know any better, when they go shopping for condoms they *buy* Trojans, and then wonder why their sex life sucks. Ahh, that alluring Trojan packaging; mmmm, that amazing Trojan smell! All condoms are by no means created equal, and there are few less equal than Trojans.

One of the first things to consider when shopping for condoms is how they feel, which is caused by what they're made of. Condoms suitable for safer-sex use are made from latex, a natural form of rubber harvested from trees found in Southeast Asia and South America. The latex is then processed to make it stronger and more elastic. Because of regional variations in the rubber plantations, and differences in manufacturing, the feel of the latex varies from brand to brand. Some condoms may seem unusually tight, while others are as stretchy as taffy. This alone can be a deciding factor in picking a rubber, since some people think a tight condom is a secure

condom, while others find tightness really uncomfortable.

Some brands of condom are made of a portion of a lamb's intestine. These "lambskins" are fairly expensive, smell awful, and have a higher risk of breaking than latex condoms. Lambskins are also porous, and may allow infectious organisms to pass through, making them unsuitable for safer-sex use.

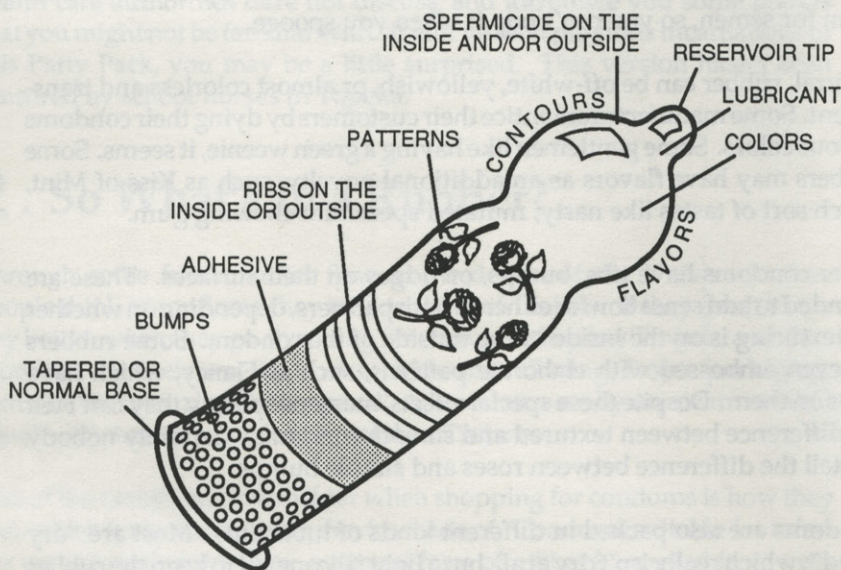
The next thing to think about is the shape of the condom. They can be straight-sided, tapered at the base, or contoured. Contoured condoms allow extra room for the head of your penis, to increase the sensation and lessen the chance of the condom slipping off. Someone whose thingie has a prominent head will probably like these better. A condom that tapers will fit more snugly at the base, creating a sense of security and acting like a natural cock ring. On some men, however, these might seem uncomfortably tight, and a straight sided rubber should be used instead. Most latex condoms also have a small nipple-like reservoir at the tip, to allow extra room for semen, so you can't pop it when you spooge.

Natural rubber can be off-white, yellowish, or almost colorless and transparent. Some manufacturers entice their customers by dyeing their condoms various colors. Some gentlemen like having a green weenie, it seems. Some rubbers may have flavors as an additional novelty, such as Kiss of Mint, which sort of tastes like nasty, mutated spearmint chewing gum.

Other condoms have ribs, bumps, or ridges on their surfaces. These are intended to add sensation for either or both partners, depending on whether the texturing is on the inside or the outside of the condom. Some rubbers are even embossed with elaborate patterns, such as Flancy, which have roses on them. Despite these special effects, many people say they can't tell the difference between textured and smooth condoms. Certainly nobody can tell the difference between roses and simple bumps.

Condoms are also packed in different kinds of lubricants. Most are "dry lubed", which really isn't dry at all, but a light silicone gel to keep the rubber supple. Others are "wet lubed", with more gel. In addition, some condoms may have a spermicidal agent on the inside and/or outside, which gives a little additional protection against HIV.

Finally, there's the most recent advance in condom science: adhesive condoms such as Mentor. Mentors have a strip of the same material used on Post-It notes, which sticks lightly to the skin (sometimes not so lightly). The advantage is that the condom will not come off accidentally, if ever, even if the wearer loses his erection. (No need to worry about performance anxiety.) On the other hand, these rubbers are a bit complicated, coming wrapped up in a disposable applicator that prevents the condom from sticking to itself while in the packaging. People sometimes mistake the applicator for the condom itself, and wonder why the whole thing makes their penis look like some infernal device from Mars. Many men only use Mentor once. Penis sensitivity and stickiness seems to be quite variable. Ow!



Some of the major features of condoms

3. Getting Started

Take a long, close look at some rubbers before using them in sex. Get comfortable with how they look, feel, taste, and smell, and see what it takes to break one. Try pulling a rubber over your hands. Fill one up limply with water and tie a knot in the end. How does this condom balloon feel against your skin, lips, dick, or asshole? With the help of a banana or some other visual aid, come up with a hot way of putting a rubber on yourself or your partner. Practice putting on condoms in the dark or with your mouth. Try jerking off a few times with a rubber, or having your partner do it for you, in order to make friends with latex. Put on a condom and rub you dick between your partner's thighs or around his butt. Don't feel like you have to consummate the act, just have a good time and explore all the different sensations. It won't take long at all for the sensation of latex to seem inviting and familiar. Play around with the different kinds of rubbers in the Party Pack to see what you think of the colors, textures, thicknesses and patterns.

If you can, try to eroticize latex. After all, rubbers aren't any more "unnatural" than Levi's, Calvin's, or leather chaps, and people have no trouble being turned on by those. Don't treat rubbers as uninvited guests. Think of them as part of that hot time you're going to have, a new toy, and a symbol of caring for your partners.

4. The Care and Feeding of Condoms

Like everything else you buy, it seems, rubbers and other latex novelties like to be stored in a cool, dry, dark place. If you're a little apprehensive about keeping your rubbers in the root cellar next to the potatoes, a sock drawer or nightstand will do just fine. Most condoms have an expiration date printed on the package. If yours don't, remember that condoms will last three to five years from the date of manufacture, which is usually printed (ugh!) on the base of the rubber itself. Bright light, ultraviolet radiation, any heat, air, ozone, or rough handling will break them down much faster. A rubber might last only two weeks in your backpack, car glove box, or wallet, so if you keep some there for emergencies, be sure to replace your supply frequently! There are specially designed condom cases on the market, or, for the fashion-conscious, a 50's style cigarette case works nicely.

5. How to Use Condoms

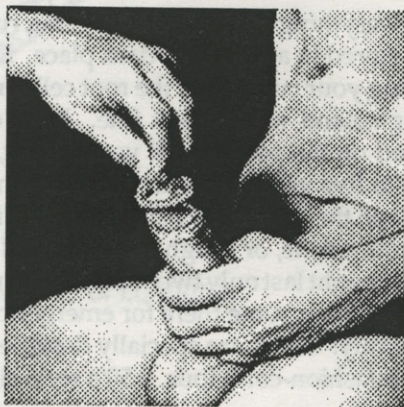
The simple secret to condom success is to use them each and every time. Keep rubbers wherever you might need them: next to your bed, by the VCR, in your locker, in the spice rack, or wherever you're likely to want one. If they're buried under your bed, dig some out and put them in easy reach before you need them. If you think you'll need several during the course of the evening, you can pre-open the packages (so you won't have to fumble with slippery finger) as long as they are used within a couple of hours. Throw out any opened ones that don't get used, because they won't last until the next time.

1) ALWAYS use WATER-BASED lubricants such as Astroglide, ForPlay, PrePair, Probe, or anything recommended as being compatible with latex condoms.

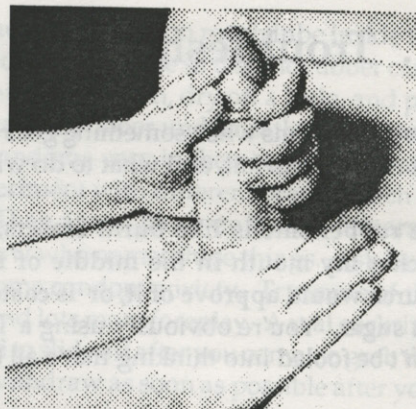
2) NEVER use OIL BASED lubricants with latex condoms. They will weaken the condom, increasing its chances of breaking. This includes vegetable or mineral oils, Crisco, Vaseline, Albolene, hand lotions, butter, many massage compounds, and axle grease. Consult with your pharmacist if you are unsure which products are safe for use with condoms.

3) Before you open the condom package, push the condom away from the edge you will be tearing. This will prevent you tearing the condom as well. When you pull the condom out of the wrapper, be careful not to snag it on the torn edges of the wrapper.

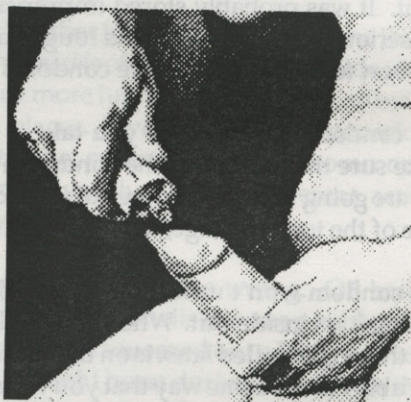
4) Press the air out of the tip of the condom. If it has no reservoir tip, pinch the first half inch of the condom itself. Men with little or no precum can increase the sensitivity of the rubber by placing a little lubricant in the tip of the condom. Put the condom on your penis. Uncircumcised men should pull back their foreskin before putting the condom on.



5) Unroll the condom delicately, like a fine silk stocking, to cover the entire erect penis. Don't use your fingernails to push the condom along, and make sure that the rubber doesn't snag on any other items such as rings, watches, restraints, or orthodontia.



6) Put plenty of additional lubricant on the outside of the condom and inside your partner. Extra lubricant is always a good idea when using condoms, which might otherwise cause the dreaded rubber burn. Remember that condoms can break or slip off, so pay attention to your weenie. You can feel this happen.



7) Right after you come, hold the condom by the base and pull out. This will prevent cum from seeping out around the base of the condom, and keep the condom from slipping off inside your partner. Dispose of the rubber discreetly. Don't flush them down the toilet, they may come back to haunt you*. And don't send them to us, we don't want them.



* If they make it past your plumbing, they might dog that of the city. Also, spermicides wreak havoc with the beneficial bacteria used in sewage treatment plants.

6. Troubleshooting

So what happens when something goes wrong? Here are some of the ways that rubbers can fail, and what to do when that happens.

The rubber smells like burnt erasers, has a foul flavor that somehow reaches my mouth in the middle of fucking, is so thick that only the Church would approve of it, or is coated with gritty stuff that looks like wet sugar. You're obviously using a Trojan of Lifestyles Extra Strength. Don't be fooled into thinking that's all there is! Try some other brands.

The condom is discolored, dried out, brittle, or just "looks funny." Don't use it. It was probably stored improperly. Remember that heat and light will seriously weaken latex, and rough handling can tear condom packaging. The best temperature to store condoms at is between 50 and 90°F.

The condom is torn when you take it out of the wrapper. Don't use it. Make sure that you push the condom away from the edge of the wrapper you are going to tear. Also, see that the condom does not snag on the sharp edge of the torn package, or on your fingernails or chastity belts.

The condom won't unroll on your dick. Take a look at it. You might be putting it on inside-out. When you hold the condom to put it on, make sure that the ring of rolled latex is on the *outside*. Imagine that you are putting on the rubber in the same way that you would roll a fine silk stocking onto your foot. Try to keep even pressure all the way around the edge of the rolled rubber as it goes on. Use your thumb and index finger like you were making the "OK" sign (or, if you're from Greece, the "asshole" sign) rather than "pinching" it into place with a couple of fingertips.

The condom feels like it's getting tighter and tighter while you're using it. Take it off and try again with a new one. There might not be enough lubricant on the inside of the rubber, causing the penis to get pulled progressively further and further into the condom, until everything is scammed into the tip. This is not only painful, but can break the rubber as well. Make sure your thingie is all lubed up, or put a small dab, no more than 1/4 teaspoon, of water based lubricant inside the reservoir tip before you put on the rubber.

The rubber slips off. In this case, there might be too much lube inside the condom, and it has worked its way down to the base so that the rubber can't maintain a grip on the penis. Take off the condom, dry off a little, and put another one on. A neat trick is to pull the rubber underneath and around your balls so it forms a cockring. Condoms vary in their stretchiness and tightness, so you might have to experiment with different brands, such as Crown, Beyond, or Skin Less Skin. Then again, there are those Mentors if you're feeling brave. (No, I don't know who names these things. Ask Dear Abby.) You might also be having some condom anxiety. Try some of the exercises mention in *Getting Started* and lots more foreplay. A real cockring also might help. Finally, rubbers tend to slide off after you come, so grab the condom at the base of the dick and withdraw as soon as possible after you shoot.

You or your partner get the dreaded "rubber burn." Ouch! This time there might not be enough lubrication on the *outside* of the condom (or inside your partner for that matter.) Latex requires more lubrication than skin, so make sure that there is ample lube in both places. If you're using a spermicidal lubricant, you might be allergic to the spermicide, most commonly nonoxynol-9, and should try either a lube that uses a different active ingredient or one with a lower concentration of nonoxynol-9.

The condom breaks. Several things might have gone wrong. Oil based lubricants will weaken latex. Untrimmed fingernails can snag rubbers as they are being put on. If all the air wasn't not squeezed out of the reservoir tip of a condom before it was put on, it might burst during sex. When this happens and you notice it right away, pull out, dry off a little, and put a new condom on. If you are into extra-long marathon lovemaking sessions, take off the old rubber and put on a fresh one every now and then. (You might also try doubling up with two condoms, since sensitivity is not lost with the ultra-thin varieties.)

1. Cut a rolled condom from any edge to the center.
2. Carefully unroll into a rectangular piece of latex.

7. The Worst Case Scenario

It can happen here: The rubber breaks at the worst possible time, right in the middle of the orgasm when your dick's ploughed into your partner (or vice versa), and you're understandably distracted. Not to sound smarmy, but prevention is probably the best way to avoid a (forgive me) toxic spill in Love Canal. Pull out just before you come and pretend you're in a porno movie, shooting your wad all over your partner's stomach or firm round buttocks.

Sometimes these things just happen, however, so here's what to do:

Don't panic and most importantly, **DO NOT** douche! Douching will only push the come further inside, and might irritate the rectal lining, increasing the likelihood of transmitting infectious organisms. The experts agree that the best thing is to douse the rectum with a contraceptive foam, which generally have a 15% or higher concentration of spermicide. This concentration is far higher than needed to kill HIV, cells infected by that virus, other disease causing organisms, and sperm cells. The effervescence of the foam will completely saturate the affected area and, hopefully, neutralize any infectious agents.

Please don't try to substitute foam only for condoms in safer sex, because foams by themselves are not as effective as an intact physical barrier. Foams are available from the local drugstore or pharmacy.

8. Condoms and Oral Sex

Here's where you have to follow your conscience. Despite a flurry of recent reports, it's still difficult to say whether cock sucking prior to ejaculation really is a way of catching HIV. If you're concerned, then try using a rubber for oral sex. There are several, especially the Crown varieties, which have a fairly innocuous flavor. If you still think that it tastes like ten-year-old balloons, try smearing a dab of Astroglide across the surface of the condom. Astroglide is slightly sweet in taste and tends to cancel out the flavor of the latex.

Another area of concern is rimming. Although you're not likely to pick up HIV, it's a great way of making friends with hepatitis and protozoans. Most literature will tell you to use this thing called a "dental dam." Now, dams were designed for oral surgery, not oral sex. Pushing your tongue through that delightfully green surgical grade latex is likely to cause callouses and muscle fatigue in places you never even knew you had. Try the better dam instead. With a pair of scissors, cut the rolled condom from the edge to the center. Voilà, a dam 1000% more pleasant to use than the commercial variety!

How to Make a Better Dental Dam



1. *Cut a rolled condom from any edge to the center.*
2. *Carefully unroll into a rectangular piece of latex.*

9. Day of the Dildoes

In a way, dildoes are the last taboo of risk reduction. It used to be that nice boys didn't do the flying helicopter squat onto sex toys, and if you ever saw them in movies, it was invariably in some frightening scenario that only your mother would have warned you about. Well, be oppressed no longer, dildoes do have their place in the universe. After all, they have never been known to shoot their wad unexpectedly.

When dildo shopping, don't let your eyes be bigger than your stomach. They range in size from the teensy-weensy Dr. Dinkies to these behemoths that can only be accommodated by stunt artists performing in the red light districts of San Juan. Pick a reasonable size. Next, take a look at what they're made of. Dildoes are made of rubber or silicone, both relatively soft and accommodating. The rubber ones, however, will develop little cracks and fissures over time, which become vacation retreats for bacteria and other unsavory creatures. Silicone dildoes are more expensive in comparison, with a smooth, nonporous surface that will last much longer.

Your dildo should have a large base, usually in the form of stylized balls. If you're into special effects, the Jeff Stryker model's balls are "fondle-able". Sorry, no tape with the words, "yeah, yeah, play with them balls, lick them balls...!" is provided with the equipment. The large base will prevent the toy from slipping inside and getting lost (and providing exciting coffee break conversation at your expense by the emergency room personnel who will have to pluck it out). Don't use any dildoes with manual or electric cranks inside. The metal camshafts have a way of cutting through the rubber and breaking free, really ruining the day of whoever they were inside when it happened. The worst part is that they don't make designer collostomy bags.

Sex toys should be washed thoroughly after each use. You don't have to boil them in lye; soap and water will do fine. People shouldn't share dildoes without cleaning them in between, since they can pass bugs as efficiently as any bona fide appendage. Theoretically they can be used by more than one person if they're condomized and the rubber gets changed with each user, but take care that no body fluids get swapped on the unprotected part of the dildo or the hands that touch them.

Finally, are you dildoes always cold and lifeless? Your smoochie-kins really likes the sight of it plunging between your supple buns, but you think it feels

like getting fucked by a bog monster? Try popping the dildo in the microwave for a few seconds to bring it up to body temperature. Ahh, much better.

10. Safer Sex Guidelines

(I'm sure that everyone knows this part by now, but if I don't list it, complete with cuddly Latinate jargon, the Safer Sex Police will break down my door in the middle of the night and bust my kneecaps.)

You are responsible for your own sexuality. No one can force you into a neoprene diving suit, or any other risk reducing technique, unless you want to. If some of the activities listed below don't seem appropriate, then don't try them. Talk to your partners, discuss what you feel comfortable with, and what levels of risk you are willing to assume.

Please remember the most important safer sex guideline: it is *what* you do, and not *who* you do it with, that is most likely to reduce your chances of becoming infected with HIV. The following guidelines are those of the Institute for Advanced Study of Human Sexuality. They might vary slightly from other guidelines seen before, but represent a consensus among the Institute's senior faculty.

Safe: Fantasies, masturbation (either by yourself or with a partner), dry kissing, massage, bathing or showering together, exhibitionism & voyeurism, sexy talk, phone sex, watching videos or live entertainment, flirting, "light" S&M (no bruising or bleeding), and using your own sex toys.

Probably Safe: French kissing, fellatio (sucking) prior to ejaculation (this can be made safer with a condom), cunnilingus (oral-vaginal contact, which can also be made safer using a dental dam or similar latex barrier, risk also increases during menstruation), intercourse with a condom (either vaginal or anal, even safer when using a spermicidal lubricant), digital insertion (fingering) with a glove, rimming (oral-anal) through a latex barrier (a great way of avoiding hepatitis-B as well), and external watersports (contact with urine) on healthy, unbroken skin.

Unsafe: Intercourse without a condom (either vaginal or anal), swallowing

semen or urine, unprotected rimming, unprotected fingering, sharing menstrual blood, sharing sex toys that have either not been protected with condoms or thoroughly cleaned between each use, heavy S&M (somasochism), piercing, or any activity that can cause blood to semen or blood to blood contact.

How are the relative risks decided? They're based on the presence of the virus in certain body fluids, ease of transmission, and some additional factors as well. Here are some examples:

Dry kissing, massage, masturbation, and all other things in the first category are deemed "safe" because HIV cannot be spread through such casual contact. (The virus is very delicate, and quickly disintegrates when exposed outside the body.)

The second category is labelled "probably safe" for several reasons. The virus has been isolated in saliva and the vaginal environment, but on the other hand, most people's saliva contains compounds which inactivate HIV. To date, no one has been able to conclusively prove that fellatio prior to ejaculation has been a means of transmission for any case of HIV infection. Likewise, no study has been able to conclusively show that cunnilingus alone facilitated infection. But in both cases, the potential, even if remote, is still there.

Mechanical and human failure also play a role in risk assessment: intercourse with condoms is safe as long as the condom doesn't break, but there is a certain chance that it might. Oil based lubricants, petroleum jellies, and hand lotions will weaken your latex gloves and condoms. Even so, the most common reason that condoms "fail" is that they are not used each and every time.

Finally, things that are called "unsafe" have been shown to be a means of transmitting HIV.

I'd like to make a comment on S&M. S&M can be made as safe as any other sexual activity, but it has a big "ick" factor in some people's eyes, and not just administrators at the CDC. The S&M/Leather community (both straight and gay) was very badly affected by AIDS, and has since been the one that most consistently supports and uses risk reduction strategies. We could all learn a lesson from them, especially the dweebs who graffiti "S&M no more" on the sidewalk intersections of my neighborhood.

11. Cofactors

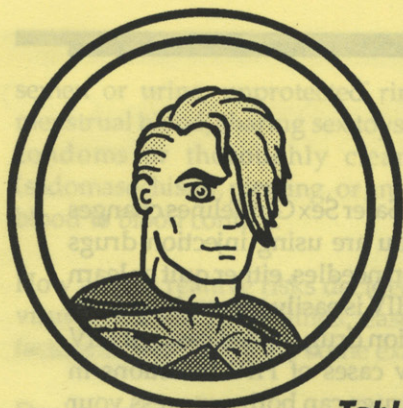
The relative risk of any of the items listed in the Safer Sex Guidelines changes from situation to situation. First of all, if you are using injection drugs (including steroids) and have no access to clean needles, either quit or learn how to sterilize your own needles*. Because HIV is easily transmitted from one person to another via dirty needles, injection drug related cases of HIV infection have now surpassed all other new cases of HIV infections in number in the U.S. Also, alcohol and other drugs can both suppress your immune system and impair your judgement. (No, we're not going to degenerate into a "just say no" lecture, but please be aware of some of the fallout from drug use, and make plans accordingly.)

You must also consider the particulars of each sexual encounter in order to use the Safer Sex Guidelines. For example, if either you or your partner have any cuts or abrasions on your skin, even relatively safe activities become more risky. If either of you have a sore or raw throat, or bleeding gums (something many people get when they brush their teeth), then oral activities become riskier. Genitals that are irritated, say from a rash, also present an increased risk. Your general health is a factor in your ability to resist and fight any infection, including HIV.

With all of this in mind, try thinking in terms of "layers of protection." For example, a condom is one layer of protection, but using a spermicide adds another layer. Pulling out before you come is yet another layer. Once again, discuss with your partners how you can combine additional risk reduction techniques with the basic safer sex "plumbing" in new and exciting ways. We've come a long way from the old days when the only message was, "Don't, don't, don't!" There's no reason why we can't have a great time and keep ourselves and our partners healthy.

** Don't say I didn't teach you anything here. To clean your works: Draw liquid household bleach (sodium hypochlorite solution) through the needle into the syringe, then squirt it out to discard it. Repeat this once. Then draw water into the syringe to rinse it, and discard. Repeat this once. Don't shoot the bleach.*

Why the odd sounding term "injection drug"? Because "IV drug" tends to conjure up the image of lice-infested junkies shooting up heroin in back alleys. According to popular myth, "nice" people – read "white, upper middle class" – don't do IV drugs. In order to get said nice people to listen, we have sugar-coat the concept with a politically correct word that Middle America can swallow.



The Diseased Pariah News and Captain Condom presents the Original Party Pack, featuring 15 assorted condoms, 3 lubricant samples, plus instructions.

Table of Contents

So you want to buy a rubber!	1
So what's in a rubber?	1
Getting started	4
Care and feeding of latex	4
How to use condoms	5
Troubleshooting (no technical experience necessary)	7
The worst case scenario	9
Condoms and oral sex	10
Day of the dildoes	11
Those obligatory safer sex guidelines	12
Cofactors (all this and more)	14

Pictures

The condom with everything	3
Incredibly explicit scenes of a rubber in action	5 and 6
How to make a better dental dam	10

Written, illustrated, and formatted by Beowulf Thorne and his trusty Mac, with lots of help from Tom Shearer, Daniel Bao, and (way in the beginning) Barbara Liechty.

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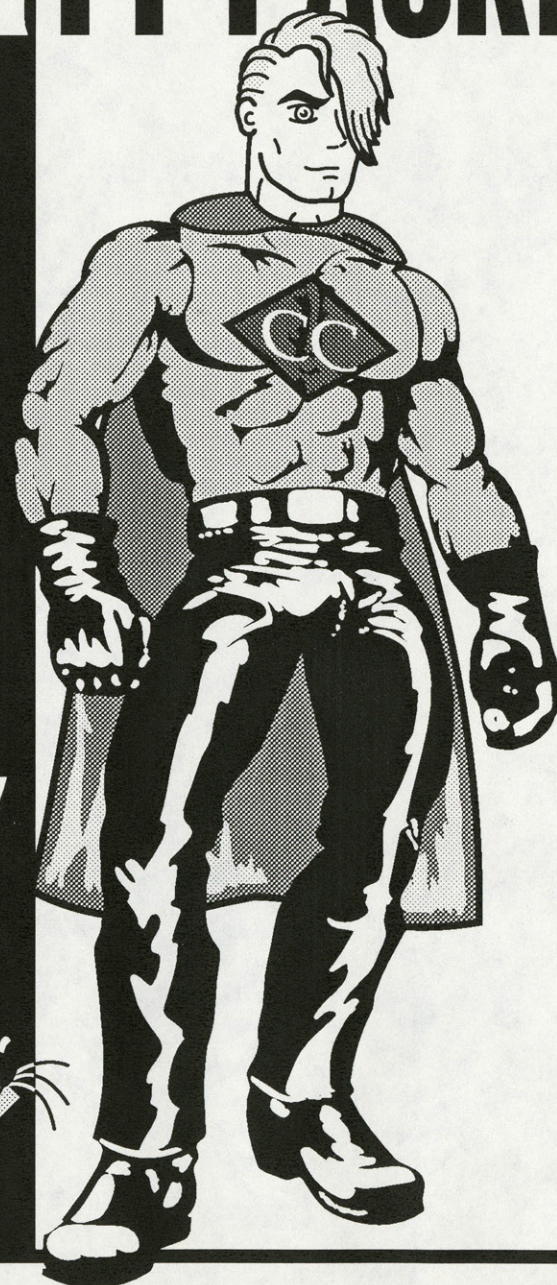
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One of the first things to consider when shopping for condoms is how they feel, which is caused by what they're made of. Condoms suitable for safer-sex use are made from latex, a natural form of rubber harvested from trees found in Southeast Asia and South America. The latex is then processed to make it stronger and more elastic. Because of regional variations in the rubber plantations, and differences in manufacturing, the feel of the latex varies from brand to brand. Some condoms may seem unusually tight, while others are as stretchy as taffy. This alone can be a deciding factor in picking a rubber, since some people think a tight condom is a secure

11 . Cofactors

The relative risk of any of the items listed in the Safer Sex Guidelines changes from situation to situation. First of all, if you are using injection drugs (including steroids) and have no access to clean needles, either quit or learn how to sterilize your own needles*. Because HIV is easily transmitted from one person to another via dirty needles, injection drug related cases of HIV infection have now surpassed all other new cases of HIV infections in number in the U.S. Also, alcohol and other drugs can both suppress your immune system and impair your judgement. (No, we're not going to degenerate into a "just say no" lecture, but please be aware of some of the fallout from drug use, and make plans accordingly.)

You must also consider the particulars of each sexual encounter in order to use the Safer Sex Guidelines. For example, if either you or your partner have any cuts or abrasions on your skin, even relatively safe activities become more risky. If either of you have a sore or raw throat, or bleeding gums (something many people get when they brush their teeth), then oral activities become riskier. Genitals that are irritated, say from a rash, also present an increased risk. Your general health is a factor in your ability to resist and fight any infection, including HIV.

With all of this in mind, try thinking in terms of "layers of protection." For example, a condom is one layer of protection, but using a spermicide adds another layer. Pulling out before you come is yet another layer. Once again, discuss with your partners how you can combine additional risk reduction techniques with the basic safer sex "plumbing" in new and exciting ways. We've come a long way from the old days when the only message was, "Don't, don't, don't!" There's no reason why we can't have a great time and keep ourselves and our partners healthy.

** Don't say I didn't teach you anything here. To clean your works: Draw liquid household bleach (sodium hypochlorite solution) through the needle into the syringe, then squirt it out to discard it. Repeat this once. Then draw water into the syringe to rinse it, and discard. Repeat this once. Don't shoot the bleach.*

Why the odd sounding term "injection drug"? Because "IV drug" tends to conjure up the image of lice-infested junkies shooting up heroin in back alleys. According to popular myth, "nice" people – read "white, upper middle class" – don't do IV drugs. In order to get said nice people to listen, we have sugar-coat the concept with a politically correct word that Middle America can swallow.

semen or urine, unprotected rimming, unprotected fingering, sharing menstrual blood, sharing sex toys that have either not been protected with condoms or thoroughly cleaned between each use, heavy S&M (somasochism), piercing, or any activity that can cause blood to semen or blood to blood contact.

How are the relative risks decided? They're based on the presence of the virus in certain body fluids, ease of transmission, and some additional factors as well. Here are some examples:

Dry kissing, massage, masturbation, and all other things in the first category are deemed "safe" because HIV cannot be spread through such casual contact. (The virus is very delicate, and quickly disintegrates when exposed outside the body.)

The second category is labelled "probably safe" for several reasons. The virus has been isolated in saliva and the vaginal environment, but on the other hand, most people's saliva contains compounds which inactivate HIV. To date, no one has been able to conclusively prove that fellatio prior to ejaculation has been a means of transmission for any case of HIV infection. Likewise, no study has been able to conclusively show that cunnilingus alone facilitated infection. But in both cases, the potential, even if remote, is still there.

Mechanical and human failure also play a role in risk assessment: intercourse with condoms is safe as long as the condom doesn't break, but there is a certain chance that it might. Oil based lubricants, petroleum jellies, and hand lotions will weaken your latex gloves and condoms. Even so, the most common reason that condoms "fail" is that they are not used each and every time.

Finally, things that are called "unsafe" have been shown to be a means of transmitting HIV.

I'd like to make a comment on S&M. S&M can be made as safe as any other sexual activity, but it has a big "ick" factor in some people's eyes, and not just administrators at the CDC. The S&M/Leather community (both straight and gay) was very badly affected by AIDS, and has since been the one that most consistently supports and uses risk reduction strategies. We could all learn a lesson from them, especially the dweebs who graffiti "S&M no more" on the sidewalk intersections of my neighborhood.

condom, while others find tightness really uncomfortable.

Some brands of condom are made of a portion of a lamb's intestine. These "lambskins" are fairly expensive, smell awful, and have a higher risk of breaking than latex condoms. Lambskins are also porous, and may allow infectious organisms to pass through, making them unsuitable for safer-sex use.

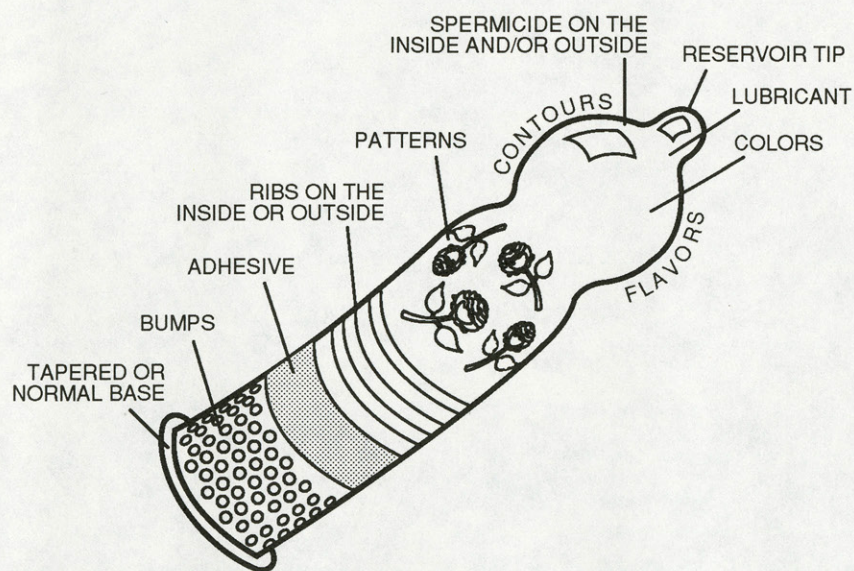
The next thing to think about is the shape of the condom. They can be straight-sided, tapered at the base, or contoured. Contoured condoms allow extra room for the head of your penis, to increase the sensation and lessen the chance of the condom slipping off. Someone whose thingie has a prominent head will probably like these better. A condom that tapers will fit more snugly at the base, creating a sense of security and acting like a natural cock ring. On some men, however, these might seem uncomfortably tight, and a straight sided rubber should be used instead. Most latex condoms also have a small nipple-like reservoir at the tip, to allow extra room for semen, so you can't pop it when you spooge.

Natural rubber can be off-white, yellowish, or almost colorless and transparent. Some manufacturers entice their customers by dyeing their condoms various colors. Some gentlemen like having a green weenie, it seems. Some rubbers may have flavors as an additional novelty, such as Kiss of Mint, which sort of tastes like nasty, mutated spearmint chewing gum.

Other condoms have ribs, bumps, or ridges on their surfaces. These are intended to add sensation for either or both partners, depending on whether the texturing is on the inside or the outside of the condom. Some rubbers are even embossed with elaborate patterns, such as Flancy, which have roses on them. Despite these special effects, many people say they can't tell the difference between textured and smooth condoms. Certainly nobody can tell the difference between roses and simple bumps.

Condoms are also packed in different kinds of lubricants. Most are "dry lubed", which really isn't dry at all, but a light silicone gel to keep the rubber supple. Others are "wet lubed", with more gel. In addition, some condoms may have a spermicidal agent on the inside and/or outside, which gives a little additional protection against HIV.

Finally, there's the most recent advance in condom science: adhesive condoms such as Mentor. Mentors have a strip of the same material used on Post-It notes, which sticks lightly to the skin (sometimes not so lightly). The advantage is that the condom will not come off accidentally, if ever, even if the wearer loses his erection. (No need to worry about performance anxiety.) On the other hand, these rubbers are a bit complicated, coming wrapped up in a disposable applicator that prevents the condom from sticking to itself while in the packaging. People sometimes mistake the applicator for the condom itself, and wonder why the whole thing makes their penis look like some infernal device from Mars. Many men only use Mentor once. Penis sensitivity and stickiness seems to be quite variable. Ow!



Some of the major features of condoms

like getting fucked by a bog monster? Try popping the dildo in the microwave for a few seconds to bring it up to body temperature. Ahh, much better.

10. Safer Sex Guidelines

(I'm sure that everyone knows this part by now, but if I don't list it, complete with cuddly Latinate jargon, the Safer Sex Police will break down my door in the middle of the night and bust my kneecaps.)

You are responsible for your own sexuality. No one can force you into a neoprene diving suit, or any other risk reducing technique, unless you want to. If some of the activities listed below don't seem appropriate, then don't try them. Talk to your partners, discuss what you feel comfortable with, and what levels of risk you are willing to assume.

Please remember the most important safer sex guideline: it is *what* you do, and not *who* you do it with, that is most likely to reduce your chances of becoming infected with HIV. The following guidelines are those of the Institute for Advanced Study of Human Sexuality. They might vary slightly from other guidelines seen before, but represent a consensus among the Institute's senior faculty.

Safe: Fantasies, masturbation (either by yourself or with a partner), dry kissing, massage, bathing or showering together, exhibitionism & voyeurism, sexy talk, phone sex, watching videos or live entertainment, flirting, "light" S&M (no bruising or bleeding), and using your own sex toys.

Probably Safe: French kissing, fellatio (sucking) prior to ejaculation (this can be made safer with a condom), cunnilingus (oral-vaginal contact, which can also be made safer using a dental dam or similar latex barrier, risk also increases during menstruation), intercourse with a condom (either vaginal or anal, even safer when using a spermicidal lubricant), digital insertion (fingering) with a glove, rimming (oral-anal) through a latex barrier (a great way of avoiding hepatitis-B as well), and external watersports (contact with urine) on healthy, unbroken skin.

Unsafe: Intercourse without a condom (either vaginal or anal), swallowing

9. Day of the Dildoes

In a way, dildoes are the last taboo of risk reduction. It used to be that nice boys didn't do the flying helicopter squat onto sex toys, and if you ever saw them in movies, it was invariably in some frightening scenario that only your mother would have warned you about. Well, be oppressed no longer, dildoes do have their place in the universe. After all, they have never been known to shoot their wad unexpectedly.

When dildo shopping, don't let your eyes be bigger than your stomach. They range in size from the teensy-weensy Dr. Dinkies to these behemoths that can only be accommodated by stunt artists performing in the red light districts of San Juan. Pick a reasonable size. Next, take a look at what they're made of. Dildoes are made of rubber or silicone, both relatively soft and accommodating. The rubber ones, however, will develop little cracks and fissures over time, which become vacation retreats for bacteria and other unsavory creatures. Silicone dildoes are more expensive in comparison, with a smooth, nonporous surface that will last much longer.

Your dildo should have a large base, usually in the form of stylized balls. If you're into special effects, the Jeff Stryker model's balls are "fondle-able". Sorry, no tape with the words, "yeah, yeah, play with them balls, lick them balls..." is provided with the equipment. The large base will prevent the toy from slipping inside and getting lost (and providing exciting coffee break conversation at your expense by the emergency room personnel who will have to pluck it out). Don't use any dildoes with manual or electric cranks inside. The metal camshafts have a way of cutting through the rubber and breaking free, really ruining the day of whoever they were inside when it happened. The worst part is that they don't make designer colostomy bags.

Sex toys should be washed thoroughly after each use. You don't have to boil them in lye; soap and water will do fine. People shouldn't share dildoes without cleaning them in between, since they can pass bugs as efficiently as any bona fide appendage. Theoretically they can be used by more than one person if they're condomized and the rubber gets changed with each user, but take care that no body fluids get swapped on the unprotected part of the dildo or the hands that touch them.

Finally, are you dildoes always cold and lifeless? Your smoochie-kins really likes the sight of it plunging between your supple buns, but you think it feels

3. Getting Started

Take a long, close look at some rubbers before using them in sex. Get comfortable with how they look, feel, taste, and smell, and see what it takes to break one. Try pulling a rubber over your hands. Fill one up limply with water and tie a knot in the end. How does this condom balloon feel against your skin, lips, dick, or asshole? With the help of a banana or some other visual aid, come up with a hot way of putting a rubber on yourself or your partner. Practice putting on condoms in the dark or with your mouth. Try jerking off a few times with a rubber, or having your partner do it for you, in order to make friends with latex. Put on a condom and rub you dick between your partner's thighs or around his butt. Don't feel like you have to consummate the act, just have a good time and explore all the different sensations. It won't take long at all for the sensation of latex to seem inviting and familiar. Play around with the different kinds of rubbers in the Party Pack to see what you think of the colors, textures, thicknesses and patterns.

If you can, try to eroticize latex. After all, rubbers aren't any more "unnatural" than Levi's, Calvin's, or leather chaps, and people have no trouble being turned on by those. Don't treat rubbers as uninvited guests. Think of them as part of that hot time you're going to have, a new toy, and a symbol of caring for your partners.

4. The Care and Feeding of Condoms

Like everything else you buy, it seems, rubbers and other latex novelties like to be stored in a cool, dry, dark place. If you're a little apprehensive about keeping your rubbers in the root cellar next to the potatoes, a sock drawer or nightstand will do just fine. Most condoms have an expiration date printed on the package. If yours don't, remember that condoms will last three to five years from the date of manufacture, which is usually printed (ugh!) on the base of the rubber itself. Bright light, ultraviolet radiation, any heat, air, ozone, or rough handling will break them down much faster. A rubber might last only two weeks in your backpack, car glove box, or wallet, so if you keep some there for emergencies, be sure to replace your supply frequently! There are specially designed condom cases on the market, or, for the fashion-conscious, a 50's style cigarette case works nicely.

5. How to Use Condoms

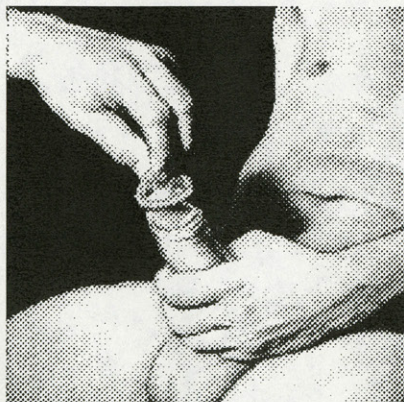
The simple secret to condom success is to use them each and every time. Keep rubbers wherever you might need them: next to your bed, by the VCR, in your locker, in the spice rack, or wherever you're likely to want one. If they're buried under your bed, dig some out and put them in easy reach before you need them. If you think you'll need several during the course of the evening, you can pre-open the packages (so you won't have to fumble with slippery finger) as long as they are used within a couple of hours. Throw out any opened ones that don't get used, because they won't last until the next time.

1) ALWAYS use WATER-BASED lubricants such as Astroglide, ForPlay, PrePair, Probe, or anything recommended as being compatible with latex condoms.

2) NEVER use OIL BASED lubricants with latex condoms. They will weaken the condom, increasing its chances of breaking. This includes vegetable or mineral oils, Crisco, Vaseline, Albolene, hand lotions, butter, many massage compounds, and axle grease. Consult with your pharmacist if you are unsure which products are safe for use with condoms.

3) Before you open the condom package, push the condom away from the edge you will be tearing. This will prevent you tearing the condom as well. When you pull the condom out of the wrapper, be careful not to snag it on the torn edges of the wrapper.

4) Press the air out of the tip of the condom. If it has no reservoir tip, pinch the first half inch of the condom itself. Men with little or no precum can increase the sensitivity of the rubber by placing a little lubricant in the tip of the condom. Put the condom on your penis. Uncircumcised men should pull back their foreskin before putting the condom on.

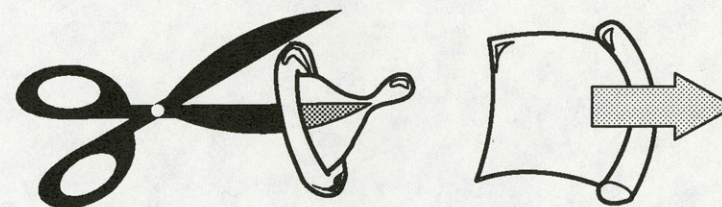


8. Condoms and Oral Sex

Here's where you have to follow your conscience. Despite a flurry of recent reports, it's still difficult to say whether cock sucking prior to ejaculation really is a way of catching HIV. If you're concerned, then try using a rubber for oral sex. There are several, especially the Crown varieties, which have a fairly innocuous flavor. If you still think that it tastes like ten-year-old balloons, try smearing a dab of Astroglide across the surface of the condom. Astroglide is slightly sweet in taste and tends to cancel out the flavor of the latex.

Another area of concern is rimming. Although you're not likely to pick up HIV, it's a great way of making friends with hepatitis and protozoans. Most literature will tell you to use this thing called a "dental dam." Now, dams were designed for oral surgery, not oral sex. Pushing your tongue through that delightfully green surgical grade latex is likely to cause callouses and muscle fatigue in places you never even knew you had. Try the better dam instead. With a pair of scissors, cut the rolled condom from the edge to the center, and carefully unroll the latex. Voilà, a dam 1000% more pleasant to use than the commercial variety!

How to Make a Better Dental Dam



1. Cut a rolled condom from any edge to the center.
2. Carefully unroll into a rectangular piece of latex.

7. The Worst Case Scenario

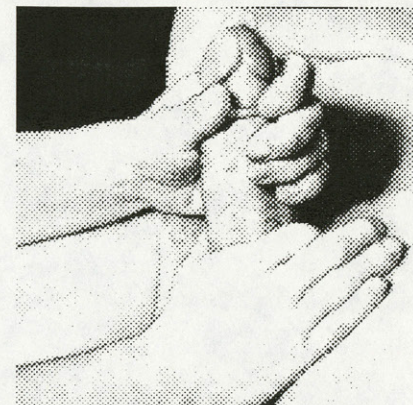
It can happen here: The rubber breaks at the worst possible time, right in the middle of the orgasm when your dick's ploughed into your partner (or vice versa), and you're understandably distracted. Not to sound smarmy, but prevention is probably the best way to avoid a (forgive me) toxic spill in Love Canal. Pull out just before you come and pretend you're in a porno movie, shooting your wad all over your partner's stomach or firm round buttocks.

Sometimes these things just happen, however, so here's what to do:

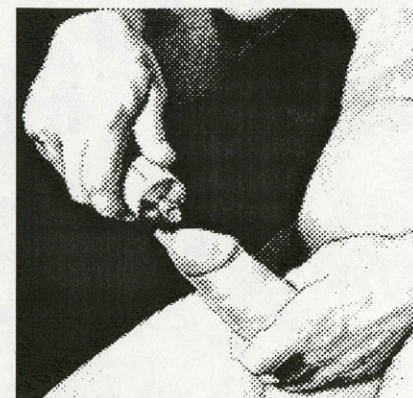
Don't panic and most importantly, DO NOT douche! Douching will only push the come further inside, and might irritate the rectal lining, increasing the likelihood of transmitting infectious organisms. The experts agree that the best thing is to douse the rectum with a contraceptive foam, which generally have a 15% or higher concentration of spermicide. This concentration is far higher than needed to kill HIV, cells infected by that virus, other disease causing organisms, and sperm cells. The effervescence of the foam will completely saturate the affected area and, hopefully, neutralize any infectious agents.

Please don't try to substitute foam only for condoms in safer sex, because foams by themselves are not as effective as an intact physical barrier. Foams are available from the local drugstore or pharmacy.

5) Unroll the condom delicately, like a fine silk stocking, to cover the entire erect penis. Don't use your fingernails to push the condom along, and make sure that the rubber doesn't snag on any other items such as rings, watches, restraints, or orthodontia.



6) Put plenty of additional lubricant on the outside of the condom and inside your partner. Extra lubricant is always a good idea when using condoms, which might otherwise cause the dreaded rubber burn. Remember that condoms can break or slip off, so pay attention to your weenie. You can feel this happen.



7) Right after you come, hold the condom by the base and pull out. This will prevent cum from seeping out around the base of the condom, and keep the condom from slipping off inside your partner. Dispose of the rubber discreetly. Don't flush them down the toilet, they may come back to haunt you*. And don't send them to us, we don't want them.



** If they make it past your plumbing, they might clog that of the city. Also, spermicides wreak havoc with the beneficial bacteria used in sewage treatment plants.*

6. Troubleshooting

So what happens when something goes wrong? Here are some of the ways that rubbers can fail, and what to do when that happens.

The rubber smells like burnt erasers, has a foul flavor that somehow reaches my mouth in the middle of fucking, is so thick that only the Church would approve of it, or is coated with gritty stuff that looks like wet sugar. You're obviously using a Trojan of Lifestyles Extra Strength. Don't be fooled into thinking that's all there is! Try some other brands.

The condom is discolored, dried out, brittle, or just "looks funny." Don't use it. It was probably stored improperly. Remember that heat and light will seriously weaken latex, and rough handling can tear condom packaging. The best temperature to store condoms at is between 50 and 90°F.

The condom is torn when you take it out of the wrapper. Don't use it. Make sure that you push the condom away from the edge of the wrapper you are going to tear. Also, see that the condom does not snag on the sharp edge of the torn package, or on your fingernails or chastity belts.

The condom won't unroll on your dick. Take a look at it. You might be putting it on inside-out. When you hold the condom to put it on, make sure that the ring of rolled latex is on the *outside*. Imagine that you are putting on the rubber in the same way that you would roll a fine silk stocking onto your foot. Try to keep even pressure all the way around the edge of the rolled rubber as it goes on. Use your thumb and index finger like you were making the "OK" sign (or, if you're from Greece, the "asshole" sign) rather than "pinching" it into place with a couple of fingertips.

The condom feels like it's getting tighter and tighter while you're using it. Take it off and try again with a new one. There might not be enough lubricant on the inside of the rubber, causing the penis to get pulled progressively further and further into the condom, until everything is crammed into the tip. This is not only painful, but can break the rubber as well. Make sure your thingie is all lubed up, or put a small dab, no more than 1/4 teaspoon, of water based lubricant inside the reservoir tip before you put on the rubber.

The rubber slips off. In this case, there might be too much lube inside the condom, and it has worked its way down to the base so that the rubber can't maintain a grip on the penis. Take off the condom, dry off a little, and put another one on. A neat trick is to pull the rubber underneath and around your balls so it forms a cockring. Condoms vary in their stretchiness and tightness, so you might have to experiment with different brands, such as Crown, Beyond, or Skin Less Skin. Then again, there are those Mentors if you're feeling brave. (No, I don't know who names these things. Ask Dear Abby.) You might also be having some condom anxiety. Try some of the exercises mention in *Getting Started* and lots more foreplay. A real cockring also might help. Finally, rubbers tend to slide off after you come, so grab the condom at the base of the dick and withdraw as soon as possible after you shoot.

You or your partner get the dreaded "rubber burn." Ouch! This time there might not be enough lubrication on the *outside* of the condom (or inside your partner for that matter.) Latex requires more lubrication than skin, so make sure that there is ample lube in both places. If you're using a spermicidal lubricant, you might be allergic to the spermicide, most commonly nonoxynol-9, and should try either a lube that uses a different active ingredient or one with a lower concentration of nonoxynol-9.

The condom breaks. Several things might have gone wrong. Oil based lubricants will weaken latex. Untrimmed fingernails can snag rubbers as they are being put on. If all the air wasn't not squeezed out of the reservoir tip of a condom before it was put on, it might burst during sex. When this happens and you notice it right away, pull out, dry off a little, and put a new condom on. If you are into extra-long marathon lovemaking sessions, take off the old rubber and put on a fresh one every now and then. (You might also try doubling up with two condoms, since sensitivity is not lost with the ultra-thin varieties.)