

sextalk.

answers to your questions about sex and relationships

factoid

62% of UA students who had sexual intercourse in the past year usually or always used a condom. (2005 Health & Wellness Survey, n=2036)

Q. When my girlfriend and I have sex, I “double-bag” with two condoms. Does this really make us twice as safe?

A. Double the condom does not necessarily mean double the protection. In fact, wearing two condoms at the same time during sex could actually put you at greater risk of condom breakage due to the extra friction it causes. Using one condom correctly is always your best bet since condoms are up to 98% effective at protecting against unplanned pregnancy and preventing the spread of sexually transmitted infections (STI). Here is some additional condom information to help keep sex safer.

When using a condom, first check that it is not damaged or punctured. By gently pressing on the sealed condom, you'll be able to feel the “air pocket” that tells you that the package has not been punctured. Condoms should be used prior to their expiration date and should feel slippery when removed. If the condom has a sticky or gummy texture, it's probably old or dried out, and likely to tear. If this is the case, toss it and find a new one.

Be sure to put a condom on as soon as the penis is erect and before the penis gets near your partner, since even a little “pre-cum” anywhere near the vagina can get a woman pregnant. This practice will also help you and your partner avoid exposure to any bodily fluids, which might transmit infection. Next, make sure to squeeze the tip of the condom as you roll it down the base of the penis. This prevents air from being trapped inside the condom and allows room for semen to collect. Finally, make sure there is plenty of lubrication before and during sex since dryness is a common culprit of condom breakage.

Condoms and water-based personal lubricants are available at the Campus Health Pharmacy – condoms can be purchased in bulk bags of 100 for \$11. You can also check out the websites for Durex and Trojan at www.durex.com and www.trojancondoms.com – they are full of information regarding condom use, safer sex, and product design.

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Have a question? Send it to sextalk@email.arizona.edu

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