

sex talk.

answers to your questions about sex and relationships

wildfact

The Campus Health Service Pharmacy offers 100 high quality LifeStyles® condoms for the low price of \$14.99.

Q How often do condoms break?

A. Not very often. Research and testing of condoms indicate that approximately 1-3% of condoms break. Few things in life are perfect, including human behavior. Condoms fail more often due to human errors and omissions such as ripping a package open with teeth, using oil-based lubricants which weaken the latex, trapping air bubbles in the condom while rolling the condom down the penis shaft, or lack of adequate lubrication (human or water-based). The failure of condoms to protect against STD/HIV transmission usually results from inconsistent or incorrect use, rather than product failure.

To achieve maximum, condoms must be used consistently and correctly each and every time. Here are some tips:

- Don't buy or use condoms past their expiration date.
- Never reuse a condom.
- Store condoms in a cool, dry place, not in a glove compartment or your wallet for an extended length of time.
- Follow package directions.
- Open the condom packet with care. Never use scissors, a knife, or teeth.
- Pinch the tip of the condom while unrolling to let the air out.

- Use only water-based lubricants, such as Astroglide or K-Y Jelly. Oil-based lubricants, such as petroleum jelly, baby oil, or body lotion can weaken the latex.
- If you're allergic to latex, buy condoms made from polyurethane. A lambskin ("natural" condom) is too porous to prevent the transmission of disease (although it provides excellent contraception).

Numerous studies have shown that latex condoms, when used consistently and correctly, are highly effective in preventing the transmission of HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, and reducing the risk of transmission of gonorrhea, chlamydia, and trichomoniasis.

Proper and consistent use of condoms also reduces the risk of transmitting infections, which appear on the skin (e.g. genital herpes, syphilis, and chancroid) when the infected area or site of potential exposure is covered and protected. For an excellent article comparing brands of condoms, check out the February 2010 issue of Consumer Reports magazine.

Resources: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC.gov) and the American Social Health Association (ashastd.org)



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

SexTalk is written by Lee Ann Hamilton, M.A., CHES, David Salafsky, MPH, and Carrie Hardesty, BS, CHES, health educators at The UA Campus Health Service.