



ALL ABOUT CONDOMS AND SPERMICIDES



What are condoms and spermicides?

Condoms and spermicides work together to help protect you from pregnancy. External condoms fit over the erect penis. Internal condoms cover the walls of the vagina and the cervix. The sperm cells in semen are kept inside the condom. They cannot get to the egg to cause a pregnancy. Spermicide covers the vaginal walls and the cervix and kills sperm.



What forms do spermicides come in?

Spermicides come in foam, gel, cream, jelly, film, sponge, or suppository form. Condoms and spermicides can be used alone but work better if used together.



How well do condoms and spermicides work?

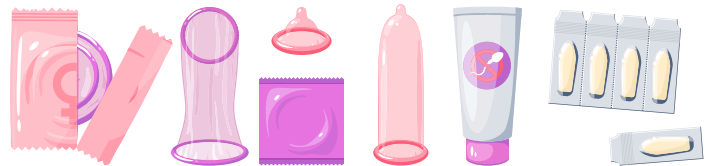
- » 13 in 100 sexually active women whose partner uses external condoms get pregnant in a year with typical use.
- » 21 in 100 sexually active women whose partner uses internal condoms get pregnant in a year with typical use.
- » 21 in 100 sexually active women who use spermicides alone get pregnant in a year with typical use.



How do condoms and spermicides work?

External condoms are made of strong latex rubber or plastic. Internal condoms are made of a soft plastic material called nitrile. They come in different sizes, shapes, textures, and colors. Some condoms are made with spermicides on them. If the condom breaks or leaks, the spermicides will help kill the sperm.

Both external and internal condoms help prevent sexually transmitted infections (STIs) like gonorrhea, chlamydia, syphilis, HIV, herpes, and human papillomavirus (HPV). Using spermicides without condoms will *not* prevent STIs.



What do people like about using condoms and spermicides?

- » Both can be bought at any drugstore or supermarket.
- » Condoms cause no health issues. There are no hormones.
- » Condoms will help protect you from HIV and other STIs.
- » Condoms can make sex last longer for some people.
- » Both people are involved in preventing pregnancy.



What do people dislike about using condoms and spermicides?

- » You may have to stop what you are doing to use them.
- » Spermicides may irritate the vagina or penis.
- » You must use a new condom and put in more spermicides every time you have sex.
- » Condoms may lessen sensations for pleasure.
- » Both people need to be involved for the method to be successful.



How to use spermicides alone or with condoms:

Most spermicides work best when put in just before having sex. Suppositories and film must be in the vagina for at least 15 minutes before they will work. Read the directions on the package of the spermicide you have chosen.

For example, if you chose foam:

- » Shake the spermicidal foam can at least 20 times.
- » Then fill the applicator with foam.
- » Put the applicator deep into the vagina. Press gently to push the spermicide up into the vagina.
- » Every time you have sex, use another applicator full of foam.

Ask your Family PACT provider about spermicidal film, suppositories, foam, cream, gel, jelly, and sponge.

When you use any of these spermicides, use condoms too. If condoms are not available, it is still worth it to use a spermicide alone. Check the ingredient list in the chosen spermicide to make sure you and your sexual partner are not allergic to any of the ingredients.



Are there any downsides to using condoms and spermicides?

Most spermicides sold in the United States contain **Nonoxynol-9**, which can cause irritation (especially if you use it more than once a day). This can lead to an increased risk of HIV and STI transmission if you use it without condoms.

Some people have a latex allergy, so make sure to use external condoms that are made of polyurethane or polyisoprene.



Who is not a good candidate for condoms and spermicides?

Condoms and spermicides may not be right for some people. Talk to your Family PACT provider about any health problems that you have like:

- » You or your sexual partner has a latex allergy.
- » Your or your sexual partner has a Nonoxynol-9 allergy.
- » You frequently have bladder or yeast infections.



Spermicides alone does not protect against HIV or other sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Use condoms when you have sex to protect yourself.



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