

CONDOMS

Condoms, when used correctly and consistently, are safe and highly effective in preventing the transmission of sexually transmitted infections, including HIV, and unplanned pregnancies. Condoms are safe, inexpensive and widely available.

When using condoms, personal lubricants (also known as lube) make it less likely that the condom will break, slip or fall off. Plenty of lubricant should always be used during anal sex.

Lubricant can also be beneficial for penetrative and non penetrative sex and should be discussed.

In general, lubricant is associated with reduced sexual pain and discomfort and improved sexual satisfaction. The use of a water or silicone-based lube is recommended, **other plant oil based lubricating substances** such as coconut oil may cause the **condom to break down**.

Free condoms, internal condoms and lubricant are available from all Sandyford sites and from a range of outlets through the 'Free Condoms' service:

www.freecondoms.scot

At Sandyford locations (and other Free Condoms distribution outlets), condoms are issued without the need to register or give any personal details and clients do not require a user card. There is no restriction to the frequency of accessing the service. Clients can use a Choices card to present without having to verbally ask for condoms and to identify their preferred type of condom.

Standard Penile Condoms

- Made of latex rubber or polyurethane
- All condoms provided are spermicide free
- A range of condoms are available (see chart below)

Internal Condoms (Previously known as Femidoms)

- Made of polyurethane
- An inner ring is inserted into the vagina and an outer ring holds the lower end of the device over the vulva

Lubricants

Water lubricants are available. These should be promoted to improve condom efficacy for use in anal sex.

Condom Effectiveness

When used consistently and correctly, male condoms are up to 98% effective and internal condoms up to 95% effective, at preventing pregnancy (Grade C) (CoSRH, 2012).

Pregnancy rates are similar for latex and non-latex condoms (Grade A) (CoSRH, 2012).

There is good evidence that consistent use of the male latex condom reduces the transmission of HIV in heterosexual couples, including those who have anal sex, and limited evidence for a comparable effect in MSM. There is evidence of protection against chlamydia, gonorrhoea, syphilis and HSV-2 in heterosexual men and women, rectal chlamydial infection in MSM and possibly trichomoniasis in women. A Cochrane review of non-latex male condoms for prevention of pregnancy showed significantly higher rates of clinical breakage than latex counterparts. Female condoms confer as much protection from STIs as male condoms and may be used for anal sex (BASHH, 2012).

Additional Guidance and Advice

The effectiveness of condoms is reliant on correct and consistent use and condom failure is often a result of incorrect use or application rather than a product failure.

- Confirm with clients that they have used condoms before and understand how to use them.
- Clients should be offered a choice of condom plus ~~and~~ lubricant if indicated.
- Offer condom demonstration if necessary. A video showing the correct use of condoms and internal condoms is available on the free condom service website: [How to use a condom](#)
- Ensure the condom is the correct size for the user - [NHS GGC Sandyford - Condom Sizes](#)

Compromised function/drug interactions

(check bnf.org and SPC for drugs)

Water and silicone-based lubricants should be recommended, particularly when using latex condoms.

Oil based lubricants (such as baby oil, petroleum jelly, some vaginal medications) can damage condoms and may increase the risk of breakage (7.7% breakage with oil and 10% with saliva compared to 3% with appropriate lubricant). These products also damage the integrity of polyisoprene condoms (Skyn) and natural lamb intestine condoms (naturalamb).

Baby oil and oil based vaginal preparations can damage condoms and make these methods less effective. Some of these products are listed:

- Petroleum jelly (white soft paraffin/liquid paraffin)
- Progesterone vaginal capsules/pessaries
- Topical clindamycin
- E45 and similar preparations
- Topical Econazole
- Topical amphotericin
- Topical Miconazole
- Antifungal pessaries
- Topical ketoconazole
- Topical oestrogen cream
- Topical clotrimazole or pessaries
- Witepsol-based™ products

Condom products available in clinics

STICKER COLOUR & CODE	PRODUCT BRAND NAME	DESCRIPTION ON CHOICE CARD	QUANTITY IN BAG
STN	Naturelle	Standard shaped condom	12 Loose
INT	Internal	Internal Condom	12 Loose
LAR	King Size	Larger Fit	12 Loose
TRI	Trim	Trimmer Fit	12 Loose
VAR	Variety Bag	Variety of Sizes	4 Naturelle, 4 Trim & 4 King Size
BLK	Black Velvet	Black Condoms	12 Loose
LAT	Sensiva	Latex Free – Sensiva	12 Loose
LAT	Unique	Latex Free - Unique	12 Loose
LUB	Light Lube	Clear Lubricant	12 Sachets

References

- [British Association for Sexual Health and HIV. The Clinical Effectiveness Group of the British Association for Sexual Health and HIV \(BASHH\) and the British HIV Association \(BHIVA\) \(2012\). UK National Guidelines on safer sex advice.](#) (accessed on line 15.9.25)
- [CoSRH Clinical Guideline: Barrier Methods for Contraception and STI Prevention \(2012, amended 2015\)](#) (accessed 15.9.25)
- [NHS information Condoms](#)
- [AIDS Map - Do Condoms Work?](#)
- [World Health Organisation - Condoms](#)