How to use a condom properly? Avoid breakage and slippage! [1]

Dear Alice,

Here's my query. I recently started having sex, and we are committed to using condoms. What is the "right" way to use a condom? I know how to put them on and take them off. But I'm petrified about having it break or come off. Also, someone told me that I should pull out immediately after I ejaculate. Is this true? This has happened before, but I have "stayed in" because I wanted my partner to have an orgasm. Is it really important to withdraw immediately after ejaculation?

Thanks for all your help,
Having fun and being safe

Answer

Dear Having fun and being safe,

It's great to hear that you are fully committed to using condoms with your partner. Condoms that are used consistently and correctly are effective in reducing the risk of unwanted pregnancy and transmitting sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV. Whether the condom is being used for oral, anal, or vaginal sex, there are some key steps to using a condom correctly and avoiding any mishaps, such as breaking or slipping. Remember, mutual consent and foreplay should always precede sexual action. Here we go!

Before you put a condom on:

1. Store condoms in a cool, dry place away from direct sunlight.
2. Check the expiration date on the condom.
3. Do a pillow test? does the air stay in the package?
4. Tear the condom package carefully? without using your teeth? to open.
5. If the condom looks damaged, discolored, or brittle, do not use.
6. Add a drop of lube inside the condom for extra pleasure.

To put a condom on:

1. With one hand, pinch the tip of the condom to leave room for the ejaculate.
2. With the other hand, roll the condom to the base of the penis or object.
3. Continue using this hand to guide any air bubbles out of the condom.
4. Add lube to the outside of the condom to avoid excess friction that may cause breakage.

**After the action:**

1. Hold the base of the condom as you pull out to avoid slippage.
2. Remove the condom and throw away in the trash, not the toilet.

You may want to check out Planned Parenthood's "How to Put on a Condom" video [2] for a (nudity-free) visual. To more specifically address your last question, experts recommend pulling out while the penis is still hard because once the penis begins to lose its erection, ejaculate can leak out or the condom can slip off. For many men, an erection disappears quickly after ejaculating meaning that to best avoid pregnancy and/or STI transmission, men should pull out of their partner very soon after ejaculating. If you continue to have an erection and you and your partner would like to keep going after you ejaculate, hold the rim of the condom against the base of your penis.

As for your concern about your partner’s pleasure, perhaps you could talk with her/him about ways that s/he could have an orgasm before or at the same time you do. Or, you could take a break from intercourse after you ejaculate and pleasure her/him in other ways. If you become aroused again, you can also return to having intercourse with a new condom. For more information about condom effectiveness, check out Common reasons for condom failure [3] in Go Ask Alice!'s Sexual and Reproductive Health [4] archive. Have fun!

Alice!

Category:
Sexual & Reproductive Health [5]
Contraception [6]
Condoms [7]
Safer Sex [8]

**Related questions**

Are two condoms better than one? [9]
Let’s go condom shopping! Brands, sizes, textures ? what to buy? [10]
An explanation of condom failure rates [11]
Does lube cause condoms to slip-slide away? [12]
Condom sizes... how do I know what fits? [14]

**Resources**

Safer Sex Map (Morningside/ Barnard) [15]
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