Dear Alice,

In my shopping and looking for condoms, I NEVER come across a formal size chart. I have been told that I was "endowed" and that I need to look toward larger sized models, but All I ever see is "snug fit," "large," and "extra large," etc. How big is big? It would be most helpful if I knew what I was buying before I actually bought it. Do you know of the sizes of some popular condoms, or of a size chart resource.

Thanks,
Endowed

Answer

Dear Endowed,

Well isn't that a lovely little (er, big) quandary to have! A good fit can't be under-estimated: a poorly-fitting condom can undermine its effectiveness in preventing STIs and pregnancy, as well as interfere with the pleasure and sensations for both you and your partner during sex.

First, let's talk penis size. The most common penis length falls somewhere around six inches when erect; anywhere from five to seven inches when erect is considered average. Condoms are meant to have a little extra space at the tip to allow room for ejaculate. Research about condom size and penis size has been mixed. While we do know that condoms can stretch to many times their normal size (if you've ever seen a condom water balloon fight, some people end up carrying water balloons as big as watermelons), some studies have found that men with larger penises experience condom breakage more frequently than men with typical- or smaller-sized penises. Others studies show that breakage rates are the same regardless of penis size. In addition, if a condom is too short, some STIs could be transmitted between the exposed part of the penis and the partner.

Penis girth also affects how a condom fits. The average penis girth (circumference) is four-and-a-half to five inches. If your girth is above average, a standard sized condom might feel uncomfortably tight and the larger sized condoms could be appropriate for you. For readers whose penis length or girth is less than average, it's important to note that standard condoms could simply fall off during sex. Snug fit condoms, which are a bit, well, snugger, are a good option for these fellows.

To find out "how big is big" or where you fall along the penis size continuum, you may want to measure your erect penis. For length, you'll want to measure from the tip of the head along
the upper side of the shaft to the point where the penis joins the body. For girth, measure the penis circumference at the widest point using a tape measure or a piece of string. You can easily do this yourself or spice it up and have your partner help out!

It might take a few tries before you find the condom that fits you best, so don’t be afraid to shop around. Some sex toy stores may let you buy single condoms or an assortment of condoms for you to try out different options without buying a whole box, which might save you time and money. You can buy condoms at places like drugstores, grocery stores, and even online! But buyer beware: different brands of condoms have different ways of labeling. So just because you’re a certain size in one brand doesn’t mean you’ll be the same size in another. Once you figure out your measurements, you can compare brand size using this Condom Size Chart [2].

Remember, when it fits you well and is used correctly and consistently, condoms can be a helpful tool in preventing STIs and are also a reliable pregnancy prevention method.

Enjoy and good luck.

Alice!
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