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Who brings the contraception: Men or women? ^[1]

Dear Alice,

Who is responsible for bringing the contraception: the man or the woman?

Answer

Dear Reader,

Either! Both! Anyone who has sexual activity that may result in pregnancy, and who is interested in recreation but not procreation, has a responsibility for bringing contraception. The same is true for prophylactics, like condoms, to reduce the risk of sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

In some cases, contraceptive methods are inherently controlled by one partner or the other. For example, women can get a prescription for and take hormonal birth control; men can't (at this time). However, this doesn't mean that men shouldn't participate in making the decision of what contraception to use and share in covering the cost. In fact, communicating about and sharing responsibility for contraception can definitely pave the way for mutual pleasure and satisfaction (in the bedroom and in general).

Consider what the American Red Cross recommends for a standard first-aid kit: bandages, dressing, antiseptic wipes, medical grade non-latex gloves, and *much more*, to be kept on hand at all times. A pretty tall order, yet rather lacking in the kind of protection you might need on a day-to-day basis. Translating this precautionary principle into a sexual pack o' protection (against both pregnancy and STIs) to be kept on hand (or near the bed) by men and women alike, a sex-aid kit should include:

- Lubricated condoms (for protection and comfort during penetrative sex)
- Unlubricated condoms (for oral sex on a penis, or because some prefer to add their own lube)
- Internal (female) condoms ^[2] (a latex-free barrier contraceptive method that women control)
- Dams ^[3] (for safer oral sex on vulvas and anuses. You can also cut open a condom or use plastic wrap for oral sex.)
- Lube(s) ^[4] in varying textures, flavors, etc. (add a little inside of the condom before rolling it on, for added comfort to the wearer)

- Medical grade, non-latex gloves (fisting and fingering made safer, especially if you have any cuts on your hands)

The point of all this: it takes (at least) two to tango, and so both (or all) partners are responsible for bringing and donning the proper gear. If cost is an issue, split the rates at the register, alternate who brings them, or one takes care of dinner, the other handles dessert. To bring back a quote from our friends at the American Red Cross, "Disaster [Sex] can strike quickly and without warning... Remain calm and patient. Put your plan into action."

Alice!

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