

Condoms too small? ^[1]

Dear Alice,

I have just started sleeping with my girlfriend and I was a virgin previously. Unfortunately, a slight problem has interfered... I tried to use a condom the first time (a free one from Health Services) and it was too small on me. I only rolled up about 3/4 of the way and was *very* uncomfortable. Is there any specific brand that I could use that would be more comfortable?

— Trying to be safe????

Answer

Dear Trying to be safe????,

There are lots of condom brands, sizes, and pleasure-inducing gimmicks out there — but it's not always easy to find which one will work best for you. When beginning to explore sexual intimacy, roadblocks like yours may arise, but the fact that you're dedicated to practicing safe sex despite this challenge is commendable. Just remember, even though it may take time and some trial and error to find a good fit, it'll likely pay off in the future.

Though most penises aren't that different in size when erect, some external (or male) condom brands offer different sizes (both in length and girth), which may fit better for some folks. Consider experimenting with different types of condoms to see what works best for you. Even though looser may seem more comfortable, condoms need to fit snugly so that fluids and exposed skin that could lead to sexually transmitted infection (STI) transmission or pregnancy are contained. And, when a condom fits well, there's less of a chance of it sliding off during sex. On the other hand, an ill-fitting condom — whether too loose or too tight — could lead to breakage, slippage, and decreased pleasure for one or both partners. It may also lead to a disinclination to use protection in general. For more information about condom sizes, check out [Condom sizes...how do I know what fits?](#) ^[2].

You'll also want to be sure that you're using condoms with lubricant on them as they'll be easier to get on. Don't hesitate to apply more water-based lube, particularly if you've picked up a latex condom, both on the inside and outside of the condom (outside only once it's covering your erect penis). Experimenting with a few different types of the slippery stuff with the condoms you're

trying out will help you find which ones will work best for you — just make sure the lube you're using is compatible with the condom(s). Relatedly, it's also a good idea to try new kinds of condoms out on your erect penis when you're not planning to have sex to help you prevent an uncomfortable situation when you're with a partner. Practice makes perfect, right?.

Lastly, though the "condom on the banana" demonstration is familiar to many people, it doesn't necessarily mean everyone knows the correct way to put on a condom. Not having used condoms before or use in the heat of the moment may increase the likelihood that people will put condoms on incorrectly, potentially causing discomfort — and reducing their overall effectiveness. To bone up on your condom knowledge, take a look at [How to use a condom properly — Avoid slippage and breakage](#) [3] for tips to make sure you're not putting the condom on inside out, for instance, or using a condom that's past its expiration date or damaged.

Good luck in finding your perfect (condom) match!

Alice!

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