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Condom fun and games ^[1]

Dear Alice,

I am a peer health educator at Texas Tech University and I am putting together a health fair on condom usage for students. The "Condom Olympics" will be held in a dorm. I was wondering if you had any suggestions for information my group could use or any suggestions on games that we could play to teach people how to use condoms correctly.

Answer

Dear Reader,

Bravo to you and your colleagues for taking the initiative to educate your peers on this critical topic! Both internal and external condoms are effective at protecting against unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) when used correctly. Not knowing how to use condoms correctly, missing key steps(s) when using, or not using them at all (also referred to as human error) can increase the rates of condom failure; as such, demos on how to slide into (and out of) condoms are incredibly valuable. With the goal of teaching people how and why to use condoms correctly, it'll be good to also cover information on related factors such as condom material, type, and safety. Here's to helping students go for the gold... standard of condom use!

First, it's helpful to consider your cast of condoms; spotlighting both internal and external condoms, different brands, sizes, textures, colors, tastes, and lubricated versus non-lubricated will make your presentation more meaningful and engaging. It's possible that some people have never seen, held, or smelled a condom, so pass the little buggers around to let everyone become familiar with them. Because there are folks who are allergic to latex ^[2], be sure to highlight condoms made from a variety of materials to ensure everyone's safety. For more information on what kinds of condoms to get, check out Time to go condom shopping! Brand, sizes, textures — what to buy? ^[3] in the *Go Ask Alice!* archives.

Demonstrating the surprising strength and elasticity of condoms is not only fun, but another great way to illustrate why condoms are so effective as a method of preventing pregnancy and most STIs. For external condoms, instruct your audience to pinch about half-an-inch at the tip to prevent an air bubble and allow ejaculate a place to go, roll one over a fist and down an arm, down an upside down baseball bat (on the girthy end), or onto an obviously phallic shampoo

container or water bottle. And depending on who's in the room (and what you're allowed to present), you might consider whipping out a dildo for a more realistic lesson.

Once you've covered the various options and condom traits, you can instruct present and future condom wearers of the world [how to put 'em on and keep 'em on](#) [4]. To demonstrate [proper use of internal condoms](#) [5], a fun activity could be to gather a variety of water bottles or cups of various lengths and circumferences, and teach your participants how to insert the condom. Then, attendees can use any condom-less phallic objects and guide them into the internal condom. It's crucial that you emphasize participants use only one condom at a time (i.e., no double-layering of condoms, and no mixing of internal and external condoms). For an added fun challenge, you can even squirt some liquid or jelly-like substance (such as [lube](#) [6]) that resembles semen into the condom and have participants try to remove the condom without any spillage or leakage. During this time, remind participants to twist the outer ring of the condom to create a little pouch that will hold the semen substitute, before gently tugging at the condom for removal.

As you facilitate these activities, a few helpful pointers to share with your guests along the way include:

- Use a new condom for each partner and each sexual act.
- It's recommended that external condoms are put on erect, or somewhat erect, penises.
- For added comfort and ease, consider squatting before inserting internal condoms.
- Use external condoms on sex toys to reduce transmission of dirt or microorganisms.
- Keep condoms in places that are room temperature, as opposed to warmer climates which can melt the condoms or change the chemical composition, thereby making them less effective.
- [Discard condoms in the trash](#) [7] and not in the toilet.

Lastly, if you really want to wow them, consider demonstrating how to turn any type of condom into a dental dam for added protection against STIs during oral sex. This is done by unrolling a condom, trimming off the tip and elastic ring (or removing the inner ring within an internal condom), and cutting along the length with a pair of clean scissors. The condom then opens into a rectangle and can be placed over clitorises and anuses during oral sex. Stepping it up a notch, folks may even choose to use flavored condoms (or plain condoms with flavored lube) and do a taste test to guess the flavor! Who would've thought that condoms could be so much fun? For more help planning your event and additional tips, you can reach out to a health promotion specialist on your campus.

Alice!

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