

Keeping Barriers Intact

The Basics

Try to keep barriers in a room-temperature, dry place: keeping them in your wallet or pocket for a long time may damage them. Don't leave your barriers in your car or somewhere where they will be exposed to extreme heat or cold. Use only one condom! Using more than one doesn't mean more protection, it means more risk of breaking!

Lube!

Lubricant (lube) is a substance that is used to add moisture. Dry sex creates friction which can create tears in the barrier or on the delicate skin of your genitals.



Oil-based products (including baby oil and Vaseline) can break down latex, so use water- and silicone-based lubes when using latex barriers. Avoid silicone-based lubes when you are using silicone toys as it can break them down over time.

LUBE COMPATIBILITY CHART				
Sex Toys and Safer Sex Barriers				
Toy Material / Lube Type	Barriers	ABS Plastic	Silicone	Glass, Steel, Wood, Stone
Water Based	✓	✓	✓	✓
Silicone Based	✓	✓	X	✓
Hybrid (Water & Silicone)	✓	✓	?	✓
Oil Based	X	✓	✓	✓

Tips for negotiating condom use

- Bring it up before you get sexy
- Put the barrier out where it will be visible
- Mention it over text: "so, should I pick up the condoms, or can you?"
- Make it part of foreplay
- Experiment with different barriers
- Be clear and firm about your boundaries

"Why do you want to use condoms – You think I'm going to give you something?"
 "I care about my body, and yours, too. I'd rather relax and be able to enjoy myself."

"Condoms ruin the moment."
 "Let's make it part of the moment."

"They don't fit."
 "We can add some lube to inside of the tip and experiment with some different barriers."

"You don't love me/trust me."
 "It's not personal, using condoms is just important to me. This is a boundary for me."

Condom Misconceptions

"Condoms aren't my responsibility."
 Sex is shared fun, shared pleasure, and shared responsibility.

"Condoms are for sluts."
 Condoms are for anyone who wants to have safer sex.

"Condoms just break."
 Condoms have to meet or exceed safety standards. Most condoms break from being stored or used incorrectly.



Have questions? Text us anonymously
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The Barrier Guide for STI Transmission

An informational guide to different barriers that can help prevent against STI transmission

From external & internal condoms, to dental dams and gloves!

All About Barriers

What are barriers?

A barrier is a tool used to prevent fluid transmission during sex. Barriers help to prevent the transmission of STIs (Sexually Transmitted Infections) as well as unintended pregnancy. This resource will focus on STI prevention and highlight the most commonly used barriers including external condoms, internal condoms, dental dams, gloves, and finger cots!

Who can use barriers?

Anyone can! You don't need parental permission. You don't need to be a certain age. You can get different types of barriers at drugstores, grocery stores, and Public Health/community agencies that even have them for **free**!

What are barriers used for?

- Vaginal/front-hole* sex
- Oral sex
- Masturbation (toys)
- Manual Sex (fingering, hand-jobs, and anal play)
- Anal sex (with lots of lube)

Benefits of barriers

There are many benefits and reasons why people choose to use barriers. Barriers provide a sense of comfort and assurance that a person is taking measures to prevent against STIs and unintended pregnancy. Barriers are easy to use and are often an inexpensive form of protection.

Some trans people use different terms to refer to their genitals. We are using the most common words here, but these may not be terms that everyone is comfortable with. Respect and mirror the words that people use to talk about their body!

Let's Talk Condoms

External Condoms

An external condom covers an erect penis/strapless* or a sex toy to keep semen, vaginal fluid, and/or anal fluid from passing from one person to another during sex. These are typically made from latex, but you can also get non-latex versions, as well as all different sizes, colours, and flavours. External condoms can also be cut into a dental dam.



Internal Condoms

An internal condom is worn inside the vagina/front hole* or anus if you remove the inner ring. Some unique features of the internal condom; they are non-latex, the material responds well to body heat, can be inserted in advance, and the outer ring provides a bit more protection against STIs that can be transmitted by skin-to-skin contact.



Dental Dams

Dental dams are sheets of latex that can be used for oral sex on vulva or anus to keep vaginal, anal, and oral fluids from passing from one person to the other. They come in a variety of scents and are free from Public Health. External condoms can be cut into a dental dam in a pinch!



Gloves and Finger Cots

Gloves and finger cots are used to protect us from the risk of infection from manual sex and the germs on our hands. They also soften the roughness of fingers and nails which can cause micro-tears. Gloves can also be cut into dams!

...and remember...

Using barriers on your sex toys keeps you, your partner, and your toys safer (and means an easier clean-up)!



** If you are using improvised toys (like a cucumber), please use a condom! They are not sanitary and can fall apart, which can be dangerous!