

## Negotiating Safer Sex

There may be reasons why you feel uncomfortable saying you want to use condoms. And, there are good reasons to use condoms: the risks of sexually transmitted infections, unwanted pregnancy, and the emotional effects of not protecting yourself as well as you want to.

People can carry infections without even knowing it. Even if you ask, they may not really know if they're carrying something that could infect you.

Talk about safer sex.

### **Step 1: ASK**

This can be the hard part, but once you start you can build on the discussions. Bring up condoms when you're both relaxed, and not already into sex play. You need two things: the words, and a solid belief that safe or safer sex is what you want. Learn what your risks are, and then talk about them.

Talk about protected sex like it's the only way to go. People who are attracted to each other often flirt and talk about sex in some way. Build in talk about condoms while doing the sexy flirting/talk.

Taking care of yourself and your partner shows respect and confidence, which are two sexy qualities.

### **Step 2: MAKE CONDOMS SEXY**

Here are some tips:

1. Unwrap the condom before you get too far into the sex play. If you have the condom ready, you won't have to struggle with it at the height of passion.
2. If you haven't planned for sex, you need to know how to get the condom open and on while still playing with your partner. Unwrap the condom with your hands while kissing or licking your partner, to keep up the sexual energy.
3. Try putting on an unlubricated condom with your mouth. Pinch the tip between your lips and 'kiss' the head of the penis. Slide the condom on, using your lips and tongue. Press on the pubic bone and pull the skin gently toward the belly button to increase sensation. You can try flavored latex condoms. If you're also going to have intercourse, put some lube on the outside of the condom once it's on.

4. Put a drop of lube inside the condom before rolling it onto the penis. This adds pleasure for the person wearing it. Put lube on the outside of the condom once it's on to add pleasure for the person being penetrated. This also makes it less likely that the condom will tear.
5. Be creative. Condoms come in a variety of textures, colors, shapes and sizes.

### **Step 3: THE BACKUP PLAN**

*What if your partner says no?*

People might feel like you don't trust them or might feel offended. Let them feel what they feel, and gently explain your feelings about being safe, protected, and respected.

If protected sex is unacceptable to your partner and unprotected sex is unacceptable to you, do something other than sexual intercourse. Lots of erotic behaviours do not put you at risk for infection or pregnancy.

Caress, kiss, lick the skin on neck, belly, chest, on the inside of arms and legs.

Rubbing genitals with clothes on is safe, and you can even have an orgasm.

Rub each other's genitals. Use lubricant for more pleasure. It's safe to explore and play as long as your body fluids and genital skin don't have direct contact with your partner's. Wash hands before moving from one person's genitals to the other's.

Oral dams create a barrier between one person's mouth and tongue and the other person's body openings. Buy latex dams or make your own by opening a condom lengthwise.

Masturbate in front of your partner, and watch your partner masturbate. It is safe, erotic, and educational. Learn what your partner likes and show what you like.

Using a condom is a way of respecting you and your body.

Your best bet: Only have sex with people who respect your ideas and your body.