

# SAFER SEX ... BE SMART



[www.lovelife.ch](http://www.lovelife.ch)

We all have our own particular preferences when it comes to sex. It has to be fun, of course, and a healthy curiosity is a big plus; then there's fantasy, and infatuation, perhaps: and maybe even love...

Unfortunately, sex can also have some pretty unpleasant side effects – such as sexually transmitted diseases, with AIDS at the top of the list.

We all know how HIV can be transmitted.

And we should also know how to protect ourselves against it.

# SAFER SEX

- **Sexual contact:** always use a condom – or a Femidom®. The Femidom® is a condom for women – available at pharmacies, drugstores and Condomeria outlets.
- **Do not allow your partner to ejaculate in your mouth; do not swallow his semen.** If you do receive semen in your mouth, spit it out and rinse your mouth with water.
- **Do not allow your partner to deposit menstrual blood in your mouth; do not swallow her menstrual blood.**

By following these simple rules, you can protect yourself against the human immunodeficiency virus, or HIV, and thus against AIDS, which is caused by infection with HIV.



# CONDOMS PROVIDE PROTECTION

In Switzerland, two to three people learn that they are infected with the HIV virus every day.

A condom is the only dependable protection against HIV transmission. So a condom is always a must – at the outset of a relationship as well as later on.

Other sexually transmitted diseases (such as chlamydia, gonorrhoea and hepatitis) are more common than is believed, and can also be reliably avoided with use of a condom.

And condoms can also prevent an unwanted pregnancy.

So remember:

***No condom? – Not me!***

# OPEN THE WRAPPER

Condoms are sold in individual wrappers. As long as its wrapper contains air, a condom is intact.

Open the wrapper carefully at the notch and remove the condom with care. If you are not certain that a given condom is intact, it is better to use another one.

**TIP** – Ideally, you would keep a small supply of condoms on hand in the appropriate place. This goes for men and women both – whether or not you are going to use one any time soon.

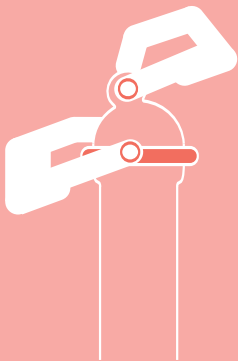


# PUT ON THE CONDOM

Before rolling a condom onto your penis or that of your partner, pull back the foreskin as far as it will go. Next, holding the condom by its reservoir with your thumb and index finger, place it on the glans. You must not allow any air into the condom.

Always make sure that a condom is right side out: the ring must be facing outwards, and the condom must roll easily over the penis.

**TIP** \_ for men (and women)  
It is best to take the time to practice putting on a condom once, or more than once...



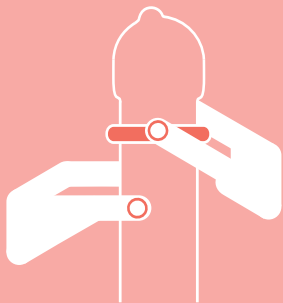
# ROLL IT DOWN

The condom must roll effortlessly down the entire length of the penis. Otherwise it is probably too tight, in which case it will not fit properly and is liable to break.

The whole business should be entirely unproblematic – both physically and psychologically.

The main thing is not to be dead serious about it. Make putting on a condom and rolling it down an enjoyable part of your foreplay with your partner.

And by the way, this is the moment for additional lubricant, if necessary.



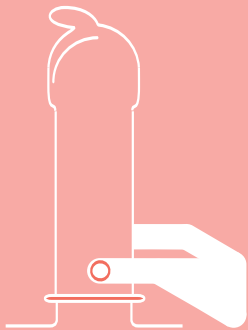
# NEXT: HOLD ON TIGHT

Condoms should not slip down. Not during sex, and not afterwards.

Following orgasm, and before the penis returns to its flaccid state, hold onto the condom at the base of the penis and pull both out together.

If a condom slips during sex, it is either too tight or too loose. It's like trying on clothes: another size will fit better next time.

**TIP** – If at first you don't succeed – try, try again!



Condoms may be used one time only. –  
Used condoms belong in the rubbish,  
not in the toilet.

# IN PRACTICE

So what's stopping you from getting a condom and using it?

No desire to talk about prevention and protection in the heat of the moment? Consider this: your partner might well be glad you made the first move!

The more accustomed you become to their use, the better condoms work. So it's worth playing around a bit and trying things out: different sizes, shapes, colours, aromas...



You're even allowed to joke about it!  
And if need be, you can also do it  
without any words at all ...

A true master of the art always has a  
condom to hand; only rank amateurs  
have to hunt for one during sex.



# CONDOM TIPS

Modern condoms are high-tech products, offering optimal security and the highest quality. Good condoms are marked **'ok'**, which attests that they have passed the most strenuous safety tests.



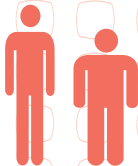
Buy only condoms bearing this mark. You can find them in any supermarket, as well as at the chemist's, the drugstore and online, among other places.

But when it comes to the crunch, any condom is always better than no condom at all.

## Individual size

Condoms are normally 51 to 54 mm wide and 170 to 185 mm long, but are also available in snuggler, longer, and wider varieties, as well as straight or tapered, lubricated or dry, extra-thin or extra-robust, etc. It's worth playing around a bit until you find the product that is perfect for you.

Pay attention to the **best-before date**.



**Do not carry condoms in your wallet.** Instead, use a little box or case, and protect them from light as well as from sharp and pointy objects.

**Lubricants** reduce the risk of tearing. Use a water-soluble or silicon-based product, available among other places at the supermarket (in the same aisle as the condoms).

Typical body lotions and massage oils, on the other hand, contain fat, which like edible oils and Vaseline™ cause condoms to corrode. So don't use them!

## **Allergies**

Condoms are natural products made out of latex, which causes an allergic reaction (itching and burning) in some people.

Sufferers can purchase condoms made of polyurethane – on the Internet, at the drugstore, from the chemist or at a Condomeria. The Femidom® (a condom for women) is also made of polyurethane. It may also be that it is merely the lubricant used in the condom wrapper that is producing the allergic reaction, in which case you should try a condom without a lubricant coating.

## **Condoms for anal sex**

Although anal sex subjects a condom to greater wear and tear than does vaginal intercourse, you can use any condom for anal sex except for the extra-thin, studded, or ribbed varieties. Tip: use plenty of lubricant.

# WHAT ABOUT ORAL SEX?

Is it risky to let someone go down on you, or to go down on your partner? The same goes for men and women both: the person receiving oral sex is not at risk for HIV.

How about if I am the one performing oral sex? As long as you do not allow semen or menstrual blood to enter your mouth, you are not at risk for HIV. – Studies have so far determined that precum (the clear fluid produced prior to ejaculation) and vaginal secretions are not a risk factor **in oral sex.**

The problem is, however, that many men cannot control their ejaculation very well, if at all...

**Warning:** gonorrhoea, herpes and syphilis are easily transmitted via oral sex, both from mouth to sexual organ and vice versa, with or without ejaculation or menstrual blood. Use a condom (whether on the penis or slit open and placed over the vagina) to protect yourself as well as possible against these infectious diseases.



# LOVE AND MARRIAGE ...

Of course, it isn't always easy to talk to your partner about your desires and your fears, about safety and about safer sex.

Especially not when you're freshly in love. You want to get as close as possible to the new person in your life, learn to trust and keep the romance alive.

And naturally, your new partner probably doesn't want to begin by talking about the risks that each of you may bring to the relationship: about ex-lovers, or unsafe drug use, or visits to prostitutes...

So a condom comes in handy. That way, neither of you has to worry the next day, or feel guilty.

Because the virus doesn't give a damn how deeply in love you are!

And by the way, don't count on your partner telling you if he or she has the virus. In fact, they may even be thinking that if you sleep with them unprotected, you must have it as well! Or maybe they don't even know they have it...



# WARNING!

AIDS is a worldwide epidemic – and in some countries it's much worse than in Switzerland.

So before you set off on your next journey abroad, remember to pack some condoms in your carry-on.

And remember this fact as well the next time you strike up an acquaintance in Switzerland with someone from one of those high-risk countries.

And, while **alcohol and drugs** can increase your willingness to take a risk, remember: the high will pass, but the HIV infection won't.

If you frequent **prostitutes or streetwalkers**, you should always use a condom, even for oral sex.

The HIV virus is more common among **men who have sex with other men** than in other social

groups. In other words, men having unprotected sex with each other are running an especially high risk – and that includes young men. So remember: condoms are crucial for all men who sleep with other men. Even if you only want to try it out once, to see what it's like to have sex with another man, you should always use a condom.

For people living with HIV: More info available at [www.aids.ch](http://www.aids.ch)  
Brochures: [www.shop.aids.ch](http://www.shop.aids.ch)  
Information on non-infectiousness during therapy: [www.aids.ch/FAQs](http://www.aids.ch/FAQs)

# THE EXCEPTION

Always use a condom for sex involving penetration, and always follow the two other rules for safer sex: that will always go without saying.

Or almost always. Here's the exception: **safer sex during the first three months** of a new relationship (that's how long it takes – see below)...

After three months, ask yourselves: have we been faithful? Are we going to remain **faithful?** If the answer is yes – seek advice, and have an **HIV test:** are we both free of infection (= HIV negative)? The result of this test is only dependable three months after the last risk situation! That's why you need to practice three months of safer sex first...

If the answer is yes – how will we practice **birth control** if we aren't using a condom?

**And if the answer is no?  
Then your answer is no too –  
if she or he wants to have  
sex without a condom ...**

Because there is still no cure for an infection with the HIV virus! Not even with the most cutting-edge therapies.



# THAT ITCHING, BURNING FEELING...

Safer sex can protect you reliably against an infection with the HIV virus. And safer sex also significantly reduces the risk of an infection with other sexually transmittable infections (STIs), such as the clap (gonorrhoea), herpes and syphilis. Condoms provide a barrier against all germs.

On the other hand, most of these other STIs are easier to catch than HIV. For example, during unprotected oral sex - with or without menstrual blood or semen.

So despite safer sex, you can become infected with an STI other than HIV. And, while it is no disgrace to catch an STI, it is important to recognize the infection and to seek treatment. Because if you detect them in time, most STIs can be cured.

**So remember:** if you experience itching in your sexual organs when you urinate or during sexual intercourse, if there is any discharge from your urethra, your vagina or your anus – see your doctor **immediately.**



# HIV TEST

Itching and burning, discharge, and sores or blisters: these are all common signs of a sexually transmitted infection.

Infection with HIV, however, does not produce these indicators.

Some people have no recognizable symptoms in the early stages of an HIV infection, while others experience 'ordinary' complaints in the first weeks following infection, such as tiredness, muscle pain, fever or swollen lymph nodes, all of which then disappear without treatment.

It typically takes HIV-positive people several years to suffer serious ailments, such as pneumonia or skin cancer, as a consequence of infection.

So how can you know whether your infection was a result of a risk situation, such as sex without a condom?

Only an HIV test can tell you for sure, although, here too, you have to wait three months following a risk situation to find out whether you've been lucky again. Before three months are up, results are not dependable. So until then, always use a condom!

You can have an HIV test done at major hospitals as well as at some regional AIDS centres or checkpoints; you can also go directly to a laboratory, or have your family doctor administer the test. Until you have the test done, make sure to get advice – for instance, at your regional AIDS support centre.



# ANY OTHER QUESTIONS?

## **Vaccination against hepatitis B**

Men and women who frequently change partners (or who shoot up drugs) are particularly at risk, and should inquire about the vaccination against the hepatitis B virus (HBV). If you have not yet been immunized, you should get it done now.

## **If you take drugs – practice safer use**

Use a new syringe and a new sharp every time you shoot up. Do not share filters, cotton wool, water or spoons.

If you sniff, don't share a straw (because there could be sufficient traces of blood on it to infect you with a hepatitis C virus).

And of course, don't forget to use a condom for sex!

### **In case of emergency**

Your condom has slipped or broken. Are you at risk for an unwanted pregnancy? Or is your partner HIV positive? In either case you should seek advice at a hospital, from your physician or at a support centre – the next day at the very latest. If you contact them in time, the specialists can explain to you what options you have. So you are not out of luck yet, although there is no easy, foolproof remedy in such a situation. The Swiss AIDS Federation (phone 044 447 11 11) can supply you with the right addresses.

# COUNSELLING

Got it? If not, you can find answers to any further questions at

+ [www.aids.ch](http://www.aids.ch)

+ [www.lovelife.ch](http://www.lovelife.ch)

+ [www.check-your-love-life.ch](http://www.check-your-love-life.ch)

You can also get counselling over the phone or in person at your regional AIDS support centre, at a hospital's HIV clinic, or at an anonymous test centre. The Swiss AIDS Federation would be glad to supply you with the appropriate addresses and phone numbers. Phone 044 447 11 11

You can learn **everything you ever wanted to know about condoms** at the chemist's, at a drugstore or a Condomeria. There is also comprehensive information available online at [www.guetesiegel.ch](http://www.guetesiegel.ch).

At the first **sign of a sexually transmitted disease**, you should

contact your family doctor or gynaecologist. Counselling and support for **contraception and family planning** is available at family-planning centres or from your gynaecologist.

**Order extra copies of this brochure (free of charge)**

Swiss AIDS Federation

P.O. Box 1118, 8031 Zurich

To order: phone 044 447 11 13,

fax 044 447 11 14

shop@aids.ch; www.shop.aids.ch

For further information:

phone 044 447 11 11

Safer Sex ... sicher! (German)

Safer Sex ... c'est sûr! (French)

Safer Sex ... sicuro! (Italian)

Safer Sex - Be Smart (English)

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