

SAFE SEX AND CONDOMS

Why safe sex is important

Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are infections spread through sexual activity – vaginal, oral or anal.

Although some STDs can be easily treated, there is no cure for other infections. Some STDs, for example - HIV and hepatitis B, can have serious health consequences.

A person can have any of the STDs without symptoms. They may be unaware they have an infection and may be passing it on each time they have sex.

Reducing the risk

The only way to be 100% sure of not getting an STD is never to have sex.

So, when you do have sex, you need to reduce the risk of catching an infection (or passing on an STD you may not know you have!).

There are various strategies to use. Choose a method that suits your situation - they don't all work for everyone.

- Have an STD check-up after sex with a new partner. If you have caught an infection it may be possible to treat it before complications develop. The sooner you know you have an STD, the less likely you are to pass it on to someone else.
- If you are in a stable relationship and neither person has other sexual partners, you can both have an STD check-up. If both partner's results are negative, it may be OK to have unprotected sex. Discuss this with a doctor or health adviser.

- If you have sex with more than one partner, or if you often change partners - consider having fewer partners. The more people you have sex with, the more likely it is that one of them will have an STD.
- Be very careful if you have sex with people you don't know well. You are less likely to know if they have an STD or have had a check-up recently.
- Use safe sex practices when you have sex, unless you are certain you and your partner do not have any STDs.

Safe sex practices

Safe sex means not allowing your partner's body fluids (blood, semen, vaginal fluids) into your body and vice versa.

It also means covering or avoiding contact with, parts of the body that might be infectious (eg. herpes sores, warts).

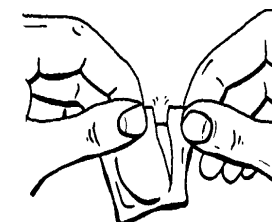
With some forms of sex, it is possible to avoid the transfer of body fluids eg. massage and mutual masturbation ("hand jobs").

Oral sex has a lower risk of transmitting most (but not all) STDs.

If you have oral sex, you can reduce the risk of infection by following these guidelines:

- use condoms - flavoured ones are available! or use dental dams (see below)
- do not get semen or blood in your mouth
- avoid oral sex if you have mouth ulcers or bleeding gums; do not brush your teeth immediately before oral sex
- if you get cold sores, don't give your partner oral sex when you have an outbreak (cold sores are caused by the herpes virus).

Using condoms



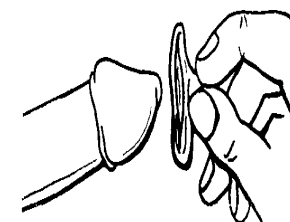
Use condoms that meet Australian and International Standards.

Check the use by date on the packet. Open the packet carefully.

Be careful not to snag the condom with rings or fingernails. Check which way the condom unrolls but *don't unroll it* before putting it on.

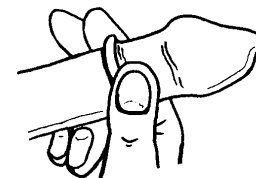
It is important to use the condom for the whole time you are having intercourse. Put the condom on when the penis is hard and erect and before the penis comes into contact with the vagina or anus.

Squeeze the teat on the end of the condom between two fingers (this is to expel the air so there is room for the semen). Place the condom against the tip of the penis.



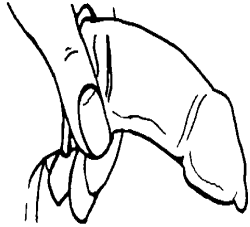
Gently unroll the condom all the way down to the base of the penis. If you don't get it on the first time, throw the condom away and start again.

Use a water soluble lubricant. This is *essential* for anal intercourse. Rub it on the outside of the condom. Lubricant makes intercourse more comfortable and helps prevent the condom breaking.



Some water based lubricants are - Wet Stuff, KY, Lubafax, Le Gel, Glyde and Muko.

The penis should be withdrawn immediately after ejaculation. Hold the rim of the condom to stop any spillage. Slip the condom off carefully.



You can only use a condom once. If you want to have sex again, put on a new condom. Don't flush used condoms down the toilet. Wrap them in paper and put them in a bin.

Looking after condoms

Condoms that break put you at risk of catching an STD. They may be damaged by:

- HEAT:** Keep condoms in a cool, dry place (not the glove box of a car).
- OIL:** Oil-based lubricants can cause condoms to perish. *Never* use baby oil, vaseline or petroleum jelly.
- TEETH:** Do not use your teeth to open the condom package. During oral sex, teeth may break the condom.
- FRICITION:** *Always* use a water-based lubricant to prevent condoms breaking.
- EXPIRY DATE:** Make sure the use by date has not expired.

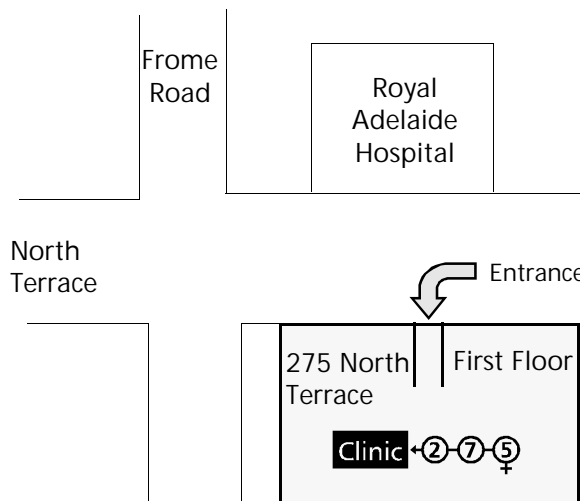
The 'other' barrier for oral sex

Latex barriers or 'dental dams' are squares of ultra-thin latex that can be put over a partner's vulva or anal area during oral sex. Some are thin and silky, and they come in a variety of flavours. Alternatively you can cut an unrolled condom to the tip and make a latex barrier.

Condoms are available from:

- supermarkets
- chemists
- vending machines
- Family Planning Association
- Youth Services
- Aboriginal Medical Service
- AIDS Council.

1st floor 275 North Terrace
Adelaide 5000
Telephone: (08) 8222 5075
Toll free country call
1800 806 490
email: stdservices@health.sa.gov.au



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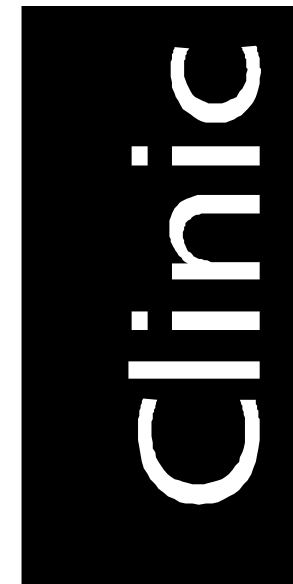
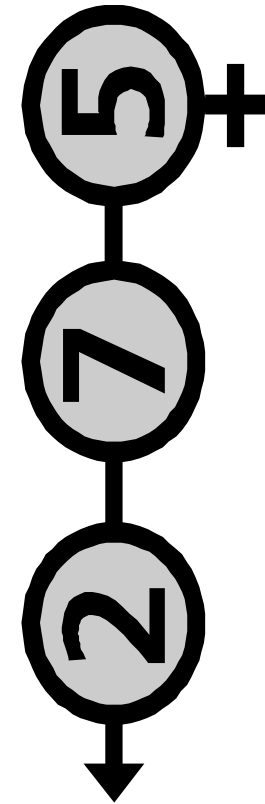
Sexually Transmitted Diseases Service
Royal Adelaide Hospital

Free and confidential advice, testing and treatment for all STDs including HIV/AIDS

No appointment necessary

Monday, Thursday, Friday
10.00 am - 4.30 pm

Tuesday, Wednesday
11.00am - 6.30pm



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Web Site:
www.stdservices.on.net