

Handy Dandy  
**HOW-TO**  
Handbook



**Condoms.**

**Unwrapped.**

the  
**ins** and **outs**  
of **condoms**  
for **gay** and  
**bisexual** men.

Nearly everyone knows that using a latex condom for anal sex (fucking) can greatly reduce the chances of getting - or passing on - HIV (the virus that causes AIDS) and many other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) - like syphilis, gonorrhea or chlamydia. However, there are many things that can affect our ability to use condoms all the time.

Do you get nervous when using condoms? Do you have difficulty using condoms? Is it hard for you to make condoms a part of sex? If so, you might find some interesting stuff in this handbook.

## **Condom Realities**

**“I’m so sick of hearing about condoms!”**

It’s not surprising that we might become tired of being reminded that we need to use condoms, because condoms form a barrier between us and our sex partners. But condoms remain our best protection against HIV transmission, and they reduce our chances of getting or passing on other infections during sex.

**“Every time I try to put on a condom, I lose my erection.”**

Some guys lose their erection (hard-on) when they put on a condom or when they are fucking while wearing a condom. If this is the case, practise with condoms when you masturbate (jerk off) before you use them with someone else.

Using a cock ring might help. There are drugs available to help (such as Viagra®, Cialis®, Levitra®, as well as herbal supplements). Taking these without the direction of a health care practitioner can be risky. Overdosing on these can lead to erections that won't go down. If you have an erection for 4+ hours, go to a hospital emergency department immediately. If this condition is not treated immediately, it can lead to scarring and permanent erectile dysfunction. Using poppers if you are taking Viagra® can cause a stroke.

**“I wasn't sure if he wanted to use one.”**

Be assertive with your partner and let him know - either in words or through your actions - that if you are going to fuck, you want to protect both of you by using a condom.

**"I wasn't sure how to tell him I wanted to use one."**

**"He said he didn't want to use one."**

There are many ways you can let him know you want to use a condom without actually telling him: You can make sure condoms and lubricant are in view and within reach of where you have sex; place the condom on yourself or on your partner to show that you want to use one; or you can refuse to fuck and have another kind of sex instead.

Some of us have unsafe sex because we fear rejection or a lost opportunity for hot sex. How will you handle it if someone wants to fuck without a condom? Can you tell him you're not interested?

**"It was really uncomfortable."**

Condoms are usually uncomfortable because they are too tight. Condoms come in different sizes. They vary mainly in their width (the circumference of the condom), not in length, so think about how thick your penis (dick) is.

Experiment and try different brands.

Condoms come in different sizes (as well as colours and flavours). Condoms should be tight enough that they

aren't easily pulled off, but should not be uncomfortable or tear when you use them.

**"I have a latex allergy."**

Latex condoms are the most widely available and least expensive. Polyurethane condoms (such as Avanti®) are an alternative to latex although they cost more. Polyurethane condoms are made of a type of plastic that is safe with both oil and water-based lubes.

Lambskin condoms supposedly have a more natural feel than latex and polyurethane but they do not protect against HIV and other infections like syphilis or gonorrhea. You can use a latex condom over a lambskin condom.

Another option might be the "female" condom. This condom can be inserted into the rectum (ass) before you have sex. You can remove the loose inner ring. If you use a female condom, you don't need to use a regular condom.

"Double bagging" - using two condoms - can cause both condoms to break due to friction. If you are concerned about your condoms breaking, keep it simple and go for a thicker condom.

**"It doesn't feel as good when I'm wearing one."**

**"It's hard for me to cum when I'm wearing one."**

Some of us like to add a drop of water-based lube to the inside of the condom or on the head of the dick to increase

sensation. Don't add too much as this will make it easier for the condom to slip off. Apply water-based lube to the outside of the condom - the more the better!

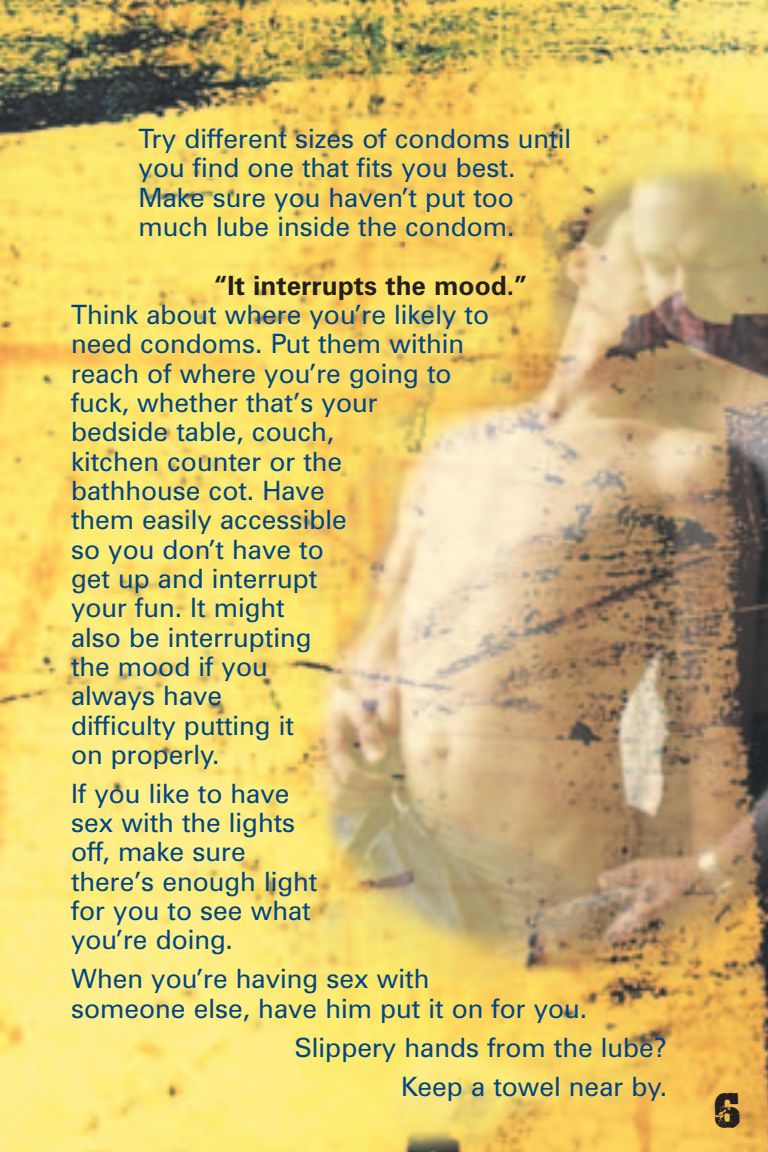
Also make sure that your partner's ass is well lubed. Keep adding lube while you fuck.

Some condoms are made thinner than others. Try using ones that aren't too thick - this might increase the sensation.

Polyurethane condoms are usually thinner than latex ones and also transmit heat better, making sex feel more natural. Be aware that polyurethane condoms don't stretch as well as latex.

**"They always slip off."**

If you use a condom that is too wide (big), it could slip off more easily. Just because you have a long dick, doesn't mean you should use extra-large condoms, as this refers to the circumference (width) of the condom, not its length.

A photograph of a couple in a bathtub. The woman is on the left, leaning back, and the man is on the right, leaning forward. A white condom lies on the floor of the tub between them. The background is a textured, yellowish wall.

Try different sizes of condoms until you find one that fits you best. Make sure you haven't put too much lube inside the condom.

**"It interrupts the mood."**

Think about where you're likely to need condoms. Put them within reach of where you're going to fuck, whether that's your bedside table, couch, kitchen counter or the bathhouse cot. Have them easily accessible so you don't have to get up and interrupt your fun. It might also be interrupting the mood if you always have difficulty putting it on properly.

If you like to have sex with the lights off, make sure there's enough light for you to see what you're doing.

When you're having sex with someone else, have him put it on for you.

Slippery hands from the lube?

Keep a towel near by.

**"I'm the top so I don't need one."**


Being the top (the one doing the fucking) doesn't mean you can't get HIV or other STIs. It's true that the bottom (the person getting fucked) is at greater risk, but many guys have become infected with HIV by being the top. Whether you're a top, a bottom, or both, using condoms when you fuck protects you and your partner(s).

**"I'm already HIV-positive."**

Using condoms every time we fuck is a challenge for everyone. Having HIV can increase the challenge, as certain HIV medications like Ritonavir, Indinavir, Nelfinavir and Saquinavir might cause problems in maintaining a hard-on.

Using a condom might make getting a hard-on even more difficult. But, if you have HIV, it's important to use condoms if you are fucking someone in order to prevent the spread of HIV. Both you and your partner equally share this responsibility.

Also remember: not disclosing your HIV status could have serious legal implications in Canada.



Using a cock ring might help you to maintain a hard-on, or you can talk to your doctor or other health care provider about things you can do to keep your dick hard.

**“We’re both HIV-positive. There has to be some benefit to that, and getting rid of condoms is one!”**

Some of us who are HIV-positive choose not to use condoms with other HIV-positive guys, perhaps not realizing the risks of getting or passing on HIV drug-resistance or other infections like syphilis or gonorrhea. However, it’s important to be certain our sexual partners are also HIV-positive before we stop using condoms.

Don’t assume you know their HIV status. You may be wrong.

**“We fucked for a bit without one before putting one on.”**

Sometimes we’ll fuck for a while before putting on a condom. Did you know that pre-cum also contains HIV? In fact, pre-cum has higher concentration of HIV than ejaculate (cum). Research shows that delaying condom use also leads to HIV infection.

**“I was too drunk / high  
to use one.”**

Plan ahead and think about what risks you're prepared to take before you get drunk or high. Lots of us still use condoms when high or drunk.

Sometimes when drinking or doing drugs, we might let our guard down. Maybe we're feeling insecure or lonely and want to be with someone. Also, some drugs can make us want to take risks we wouldn't when sober. If you're planning to party, maybe it's best to decide not to fuck, or make sure that you party with friends who can remind you to be safe.


**“Why should I bother? At my age,  
I don't care if I get something.”**

Lots of us who are older have great sex and lead full lives. But some of us may not be in this situation.

As older men, some of us might think that getting HIV isn't a big deal, or that it's inevitable that we'll get HIV. Maybe it's more difficult to find sexual partners.

If that's the case, we might not insist on using condoms.

But staying healthy is important.



If you are older and have trouble keeping a hard-on, talk to your doctor.

**“We didn’t have a condom with us.”**

Maybe in the heat of the moment, you realize you don’t have a condom. You might really want to fuck, but are you willing to live with the anxiety you might feel afterwards, knowing you could have been infected with HIV or something else, or that you may have passed it along? Plan ahead in the future and have condoms and lube handy.

**“I know him really well.”**

Knowing someone well doesn’t make you safe from HIV transmission.

Some of us may think we don’t have HIV but could have been infected since the last time when we were tested. Or, some of us with HIV might assume that our sex partner also has HIV.

We might think we know - but how do we know what we know?



**“I’m in a relationship.”**


Being in a relationship means many different things to people. And, a relationship isn’t automatically protection from infection or re-infection with HIV or other STIs.

Negotiating what you want in relationships and keeping it safe can be complex.

Pick up the Handy Dandy How-To Handbook on Dating and Relationships *“Getting Together”* to find out more.

**“Each of us has to take responsibility for ourselves. I’m doing what I want and I’m assuming he knows better and is doing what he wants.”**

HIV prevention messages have encouraged us to take care of ourselves.



The assumption has been that if each of us takes care of ourselves, and we know about the risks of HIV transmission, then we will all use condoms to avoid getting or passing on HIV. But, we know the real world isn't that simple.

In reality, many of us don't always use condoms even when we know there are serious risks.

It's time we started to look out not only for ourselves, but for others.

Most of us who are HIV-positive are concerned about transmitting HIV to others. Most of us who are HIV-negative would not want to pass on a different infection (like syphilis) to someone with HIV.

The next time you are about to fuck without a condom with a friend or casual partner, think twice. Isn't your health worth it? Isn't his?

# The Bottom Line

**There are lots of good reasons to use condoms.**

Some guys like using condoms because it makes fucking a lot cleaner. Using condoms also means not having to worry about getting or passing on HIV.

Condoms can also help reduce the risk of getting or passing on some STIs - like gonorrhea or syphilis. If you have one of these infections, it makes it easier for you to get infected with HIV.

If you are HIV-positive, having an STI makes it easier to pass HIV on to others.

**Find your own reasons to use condoms and make them part of your sexual life! Follow the tips below the next time you meet Mr. Right (or Mr. Right Now).**

## Handy Dandy Condom Use Guide

**Where should I keep them?**

- Have them handy so you don't have to get up and interrupt your fun.
- Condoms and the packs they come in are delicate... you don't want to squish the air out or tear them.

- Store your condoms in places where they won't get too hot or too cold - like a jacket pocket, or a bedside drawer.
- Getting condoms too hot or cold can damage them, so don't store them in the back pocket or your pants or in the glove compartment of your car.
- Keep condoms in a cool, dry place.

### **Before putting one on:**

- There should be an expiry date on the condom pack, usually indicated as a month and a year. Don't use one that is past, or close to, the expiry date. If you don't see an expiry date, don't use it: it's probably a gimmick/novelty condom.
- Never use latex condoms that are lubricated with nonoxynol-9 (a spermicide), as this can irritate the lining of the anus (ass), increasing your risk for HIV transmission.

- Squeeze the condom pack gently between your fingers. There should be air in the package. If there is no air, don't use the condom since it has probably dried out.
- To open, squeeze the condom to one side of the package and tear the package open with your fingers. Don't use your teeth as this increases the chance of tearing the condom.

### **Slip it on!**

- You've got to be hard before you put a condom on. If you have trouble staying hard, try using a cock ring to keep your dick hard. Be careful not to keep it too tight.
- Look to see which way the condom is rolled - the tip of the condom should face up before you roll it down. (If you try to put it on the wrong way, discard it and use another one as you may have got pre cum on the condom.)
- Squeeze and hold the tip of the condom while you roll it down your dick with your other hand. Leaving this little bit of room at the tip of the condom helps to hold the cum.

- A condom isn't a winter tuque - don't pull the condom to stretch it over the head of your dick.
- Roll the condom down the shaft of the dick (while holding on to the tip).
- Make sure you roll it down all the way to the base of the dick.

### **Lube it up!**

- Some of us like to add a drop of lube to the inside of the condom or on the head of the penis before putting on the condom, to increase sensation. Adding too much, though, can make it easier for the condom to slip off. Don't lube the shaft of your dick before rolling it on.
- Apply water-based lube to the outside of the condom - the more the better. If you're getting fucked, make sure that your ass is well lubed. Keep adding lube while you fuck.
  - Water-based lubes may need applying more often as they can dry out more quickly.
  - Silicone-based lubes are more expensive but do not dry out as quickly.

- Oil-based lubes should never be used with latex condoms as they break down the latex, but they can be used with polyurethane condoms.
- Saliva (spit) is not a very good lube since it dries out quickly.

### **While fucking:**

- If you're getting fucked, check with your hand to make sure the condom is still rolled to the base of the dick and to make sure it hasn't slipped, been taken off, or torn.
- If you're fucking for a long time, change the condom periodically as the condom can wear down.
- Certain drugs can make you fuck for a long time before you cum. It's really important to check that the condom is well lubricated, hasn't torn or slipped off, and is changed every so often.

### **When you're done:**

- Pull your dick out while you are still hard or the condom could come off inside his ass. Hold the base of the condom to keep it in place while you pull out.
- If you're getting fucked, makes sure that your partner has pulled out with the condom still on his dick.
- To further reduce risk, pull out before you cum. If you shoot your load on your partner, make sure to avoid cumming on any cuts or sores.
- Unroll the condom from your dick and tie a knot in it. Throw it in the garbage rather than flushing it down the toilet.
- Wash your dick with soap and warm water. It's also a good idea to urinate (piss) after you fuck.

For more information about HIV, AIDS, safer sex, and condom use contact your local AIDS organization.

Need more HIV and/or Hep C information and resources? Contact CATIE (Canadian AIDS Treatment Information Exchange) 1-800-263-1638 [www.catie.ca](http://www.catie.ca)



AIDS Committee of Toronto

399 church street,  
4th floor  
toronto, ontario M5B 2J6  
tel 416-340-2437  
fax 416-340-8224  
[www.actoronto.org](http://www.actoronto.org)  
[ask@actoronto.org](mailto:ask@actoronto.org)

**Special thanks to all the volunteer models.**

This publication has been printed with assistance from CATIE, 2010. CATIE Ordering Centre Catalogue Number: ATI-26073