

Women's Health

The Female Condom

What is it?

The female condom is a thin, soft loose-fitting pouch with two flexible rings at either end. One ring helps hold the device in place inside the woman's vagina over the end of the womb (cervix), while the other ring rests outside the vagina.

The female condom is made of polyurethane, a type of plastic. The plastic condom covers the inside of the vagina, cervix, and perineum (outer lips). The device acts as a barrier to help prevent pregnancy and the transmission of germs that can cause sexually transmitted Infections (STI's), including HIV/AIDS. The device can be inserted by the woman up to 8 hours before sex.

How to Insert the Female Condom

Find a comfortable position. You may want to stand up with one foot on a chair, squat with knees apart, or lie down with legs bent and knees apart.

Hold the female condom with the open end hanging down. Squeeze the inner ring with your thumb and middle finger.

Holding the inner ring squeezed together, insert the ring into the vagina and push the inner ring and pouch into the vagina past the pubic bone.

When properly inserted, the outer ring will hang down slightly outside the vagina. During intercourse, when the penis enters the vagina, the slack will lessen.

Remember: The female condom may be hard to hold or slippery at first. Before you use one for the first time before sex, practice inserting one to get used to it. Take your time. Be sure to insert the condom straight into the vagina without twisting the pouch.

How to Remove the Female Condom After Use

Squeeze and twist the outer ring to keep the sperm inside the pouch.

Pull the female condom out gently.

Throw the condom away in the garbage. Do not flush down the toilet.

Do not wash out and use again.

Points to Remember

Use a new female condom with every act of intercourse.

Use it every time you have intercourse.

Read and follow the directions carefully.

Do not use a male and female condom at the same time.

Be careful not to tear the condom with fingernails or sharp objects.

Use enough lubricant.