



SHARP News



Sexual Health and Responsibility Program (SHARP)

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Incorrect Condom Use by Many

Question: In a recent study¹, what percent of 779 heterosexual, non-monogamous women aged 18-24 who used condoms recently said, within the past 3 months, their partner put a condom on after some penetration had occurred?

- (a) 4% (b) 14% (c) 44%

Answer: 44% !

Many young adults use condoms to prevent pregnancy rather than to prevent sexually transmitted infections, and may incorrectly believe that putting the condom on before ejaculation, but after some penetration, is safe. They may not be aware that delaying condom use until after some penetration reduces the condom's effectiveness in pregnancy prevention, and reduces the condom's effectiveness in preventing sexually transmitted infections, particularly those spread through skin-to-skin contact such as Human Papillomavirus and Herpes Simplex Virus.

Condom use is not as safe as abstinence or monogamy. For people who choose to have sex outside a monogamous relationship, correct and consistent use of latex condoms reduces the risk of unplanned pregnancies and many sexually transmitted infections. For populations in which condom use is high, **it may be important to focus health interventions on correct condom use.** Too often, we inappropriately equate consistent use (use every time) with correct use. Correct condom use messages should include:

- Use a new condom for every act.
- Put the condom on before any sexual contact begins.
- Pinch the tip of the condom when rolling it on to leave space (without air) at the tip.
- Do not use oil based lubricants with latex condoms (do not use Vaseline, vegetable oil, mineral oil or cold cream).
- Leave the condom on until all sexual contact ceases.
- Stop and replace the condom if it slips off or breaks.
- Hold the condom and withdraw while erect to prevent slipping and spilling.
- Do not reuse a condom.

The SHARPFact factsheet "[Male Latex Condoms](#)" and "[Female Condoms](#)" may be accessed from the SHARP website and be used to supplement discussions. Planned Parenthood has an excellent webpage about correct condom use and how to negotiate condom use with a partner at

<http://www.plannedparenthood.org/bc/condom.htm#How%20To>

1. Civic, D. et al (2002). Ineffective use of condoms among young women in managed care. AIDS Care No. 6, pp 779-788