

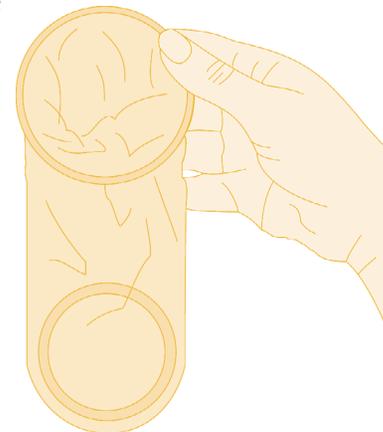
Where can you get female condoms?

Female condoms are available without a prescription at many locations: drug stores, school health clinics, Planned Parenthood, public health department clinics, and other community health clinics, etc.

Female Condom

How the female condom works

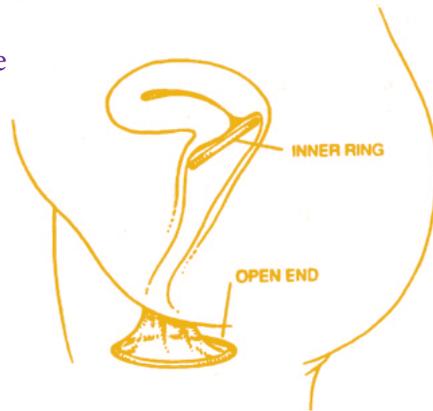
The female condom is available in two types (FC and FC2) and carries various brand names. The FC is a soft, loose-fitting polyurethane sheath (pouch) that is a physical barrier that lines the vagina during sexual intercourse. The FC has a soft ring at each end of the pouch. The closed end of the pouch (along with a ring) is used to put the condom into the vagina to hold it in place. The open end stays outside of the vagina. The open end ring is used as a guide to insert the penis into the vagina. FC2 has the same design but is a less expensive female condom that is made of nitrile, a synthetic rubber. For either female condom, follow the package instructions for insertion.



How to use the female condom

- Take the female condom out of its package and read the instructions; the drawings can help show how to put it in.
- Check the expiration date.
- It can be inserted up to 8 hours before intercourse.
- Hold the pouch with the open end hanging down.
- Squeeze the inner ring together and slide the condom into the vagina.

- Put your index finger inside the condom and push the inner ring the rest of the way into the vagina. Check that the inner ring is up past the pubic bone.
- The outer ring stays outside the vagina.
- During sex it is okay for the condom to move around. But if you feel the outer ring start to be pushed into the vagina, or if the penis starts to go up along the outside of the condom, STOP, take the condom out and use another condom.
- After sex, squeeze and twist the outer ring to keep the semen from spilling, and gently pull the condom out.
- Throw it away (don't flush it!).
- Female and male condoms should not be used together; they can stick together, causing one or both of them to slip out of place.



Effectiveness

Female condoms are in the Tier 3 level of contraceptive effectiveness because preventing pregnancy depends on using a condom correctly each time a woman has sex. Typically 21 out of 100 women are likely to get pregnant within 1 year of use. If she doesn't use it every time or it slips, breaks, or is put in or taken out the wrong way, her chance of getting pregnant goes up.

GENERAL REFERENCE: Contraceptive Technology (CT): 20th Rev. Ed., 2011 and CT Update (monthly newsletter).

Female condom use becomes more effective with practice. A woman can practice putting it in before using it with a partner.

If your condom breaks or slips, you can use emergency contraception (EC) to prevent pregnancy. Ask your pharmacist, call your local family planning clinic, or visit the website <http://www.ec.princeton.edu> to find out where you can get EC.

Benefits of the female condom

Polyurethane female condoms are non-hormonal, woman-controlled and provide protection against pregnancy and some sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV. Female condoms are easily available from many sources without a prescription. You can insert the condom up to 8 hours before intercourse. The polyurethane material is stronger and less likely to cause allergic reactions than the latex used in some male condoms.

Potential side effects or disadvantages

You will need to practice to learn how to use this method correctly.

Some people may feel uncomfortable buying female condoms in a drug store or health clinic. Some may feel uncomfortable using them because they think condom use implies a lack of trust or intimacy. To be effective, a new condom must be used every time, so some planning ahead is necessary. Female condoms are more expensive than male condoms.

Potential risks

No known health risks.