



Condom Quick Facts

By Kjersten Oligney and Linda Klepacki
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Is consistent and correct condom use common?

No.

Forty percent of unmarried adults used a condom the last time they had intercourse.¹

Forty-five percent of 15- to 19-year-old boys use a condom consistently.² The number shrinks as they get older: 39 percent of 19-year-old boys use condoms, compared to 70 percent of 16-year-old boys.³ It is important to note this because older teens are more likely to be infected with and transmit STDs.⁴

How often do condoms break or slip?

Condom breakage rates and slippage rates are each between 1.5 percent and 3.5 percent.⁵

Do condoms prevent pregnancy?

Approximately 15 percent of women who depend on condoms for contraception will become pregnant within the first year of use.⁶ If a sexually active 15-year-old girl practices a typical use of condoms, she has a 50 percent chance of becoming pregnant before she is 20.⁷

Do condoms prevent transmission of STDs?

Sexual abstinence outside marriage and mutual faithfulness within marriage between uninfected partners are the only foolproof means of preventing STDs. Correct and consistent condom use can reduce, but not eliminate, the risk of acquiring some STDs.⁸

Chancroid

There is no clinical proof of condom effectiveness against Chancroid transmission.⁹

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Chlamydia

Studies reviewed at the time of the National Institutes of Health consensus conference in 2000 did not find evidence that condoms reduced the risk of acquiring chlamydia. However, subsequent studies have suggested that there may be risk reduction of up to 50 percent.¹⁰

Gonorrhea

Consistent condom use reduces the risk of gonorrhea transmission to both men and women. Estimates vary, but range as high as 62 percent risk reduction.¹¹

Herpes

Consistent condom use may decrease the risk of herpes transmission. Again, estimates vary. One study showed a rather improbable 92 percent risk reduction for women, but none for men.¹² However, condoms provide no protection against infection from lesions that lie outside the area covered by the condom.

HIV

Consistent condom use can reduce the risk of HIV transmission by 85 percent.¹³

Human Papillomavirus (HPV)

The NIH conference found no evidence that condom use reduces the risk for HPV transmission. Further studies have continued to find no evidence of risk reduction.¹⁴

Syphilis

The NIH conference found no evidence of condom risk reduction for syphilis. Since then, one study in Uganda has found a risk reduction of 29 percent.¹⁵

Trichomoniasis

Evidence for condom risk reduction for trichomoniasis can best be described as inconclusive.¹⁶

¹ Anderson, Wilson, Doll, Jones and Barker, "Condom use and HIV risk behaviors among U.S. adults: Data from a national survey," *Family Planning Perspectives*, 1999;31:24-28.

² "Sex, Condoms & STDs: What We Now Know," *The Medical Institute*.

³ Sonenstein, Ku, Lindberg, Turner, Pleck, "Changes in sexual behavior and condom use among teenaged males: 1988-1995," *American Journal of Public Health*, 1998;88:956-959; Sonenstein and Stryker, "Why some men don't use condoms: Male attitudes about condoms and other contraceptives," Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation. 1997:4.

⁴ "Sexual Health Update," *The Medical Institute for Sexual Health*, Vol. 8, No. 3, Fall 2000, p. 2.

⁵ National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, National Institutes of Health, Department of Health and Human Services, "Workshop Summary: Scientific Evidence on Condom Effectiveness for Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) Prevention," Herndon, VA: Hyatt Dulles Airport, June 12-13, 2000),

<http://www.niaid.nih.gov/dmid/stds/condomreport.pdf>, (24 January 2005), 10; Frezieres, Walsh, Nelson, Clark, Coulson, "Breakage and acceptability of a polyurethane condom: A randomized, controlled study," *Family Planning Perspectives*, 1998;30:73-78; Frezieres, Walsh, Nelson, Clark, Coulson, "Evaluation of the efficacy of a polyurethane condom: Results from a randomized, controlled, clinical trial," *Family Planning Perspectives*, 1999;31:81-87; Macaluso, Kelaghan, Artz et al, "Mechanical failure of the latex condom in a cohort of women at high STD risk," *Sexually Transmitted Diseases*, 1999;26:450-458.

⁶ "Sexual Health Update," Vol. 8, No. 3, Fall 2000, p. 2.

⁷ "Sexual Health Update," Vol. 8, No. 3, Fall 2000, p. 3.

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⁸ “Workshop Summary: Scientific Evidence on Condom Effectiveness for Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) Prevention,” 2000 (24 January 2005).

⁹ “Workshop Summary: Scientific Evidence on Condom Effectiveness for Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) Prevention,” 2000, p. 21, (24 January 2005).

¹⁰ Ahmed, Lutalo, Wawer et al, "HIV incidence and sexually transmitted disease prevalence associated with condom use: a population study in Rakai, Uganda," *AIDS* 2001; 15:2171-9; Sanchez, Campos, Courtois et al, "Prevention of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) in female sex workers: prospective evaluation of condom promotion and strengthened STD services," *Sexually Transmitted Diseases* 2003; 30:273-9.

¹¹ Ahmed, et al, 2001, 15:2171-9; Sanchez, Campos, Courtois, et al, "Prevention of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) in female sex workers: prospective evaluation of condom promotion and strengthened STD services," *Sexually Transmitted Diseases* 2003; 30:273-9.

¹² Wald, Langenberg, Link et al, "Effect of condoms on reducing the transmission of herpes simplex virus type 2 from men to women," *JAMA* 2001; 285:3100-6.

¹³ "Condoms and STDs," The Medical Institute, <http://www.medinstitute.org>, (14 March 2005); “Workshop Summary: Scientific Evidence on Condom Effectiveness for Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) Prevention,” 2000, p. 14 (24 January 2005).

¹⁴ “Workshop Summary: Scientific Evidence on Condom Effectiveness for Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) Prevention,” 2000, (24 January 2005); Julie Louise Gerberding, “Report to Congress: Prevention of Genital Human Papillomavirus Infection,” January 2004, <http://www.cdcnpin.org/scripts/std/HPV%20ReportJan%202004.pdf>, (26 January 2005), 4; “Condoms and STDs,” The Medical Institute.

¹⁵ “Workshop Summary: Scientific Evidence on Condom Effectiveness for Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) Prevention,” 2000, pp. 22-23.

¹⁶ “Workshop Summary: Scientific Evidence on Condom Effectiveness for Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) Prevention,” 2000).