



Sex with no condom

Key Facts and Discussion

Facilitators' Guide

Unsure about how to talk to your partner about using a condom? Or why it's so important? Here are our top tips:

1. Condoms are one of the only ways to protect yourself from HIV and other STIs, they can also prevent unplanned pregnancy.
2. Condoms are very effective. They provide a physical barrier between the guy's semen (cum) and the woman's vagina. Female condoms are put inside the vagina before sex, while male condoms are put on the penis.
3. If you want to have sex but you're unsure about how to use a condom then practise, practise, practise! Take a condom and a banana (or any other suitable object) and try putting on and rolling down the condom. That way you'll feel confident and ready when the moment comes.
4. It can be easy to get carried away in the heat of the moment and not use a condom. Talking about it with your partner beforehand means you are both clear on what you want.
5. You may not know the person you're planning on having sex with very well – you'll get to know them better by talking about how to protect yourselves from HIV, other STIs and unplanned pregnancy.
6. If your partner pressures you into having sex without a condom or doesn't agree to use one then it could be a sign that you're with someone who isn't taking care of themselves and doesn't care enough about you.
7. Remember that you should never use a condom more than once, neither should you double up, as this creates friction and the condoms could break.
8. Condoms usually come pre-lubricated, but extra lubrication reduces HIV risk and feels good! If you're using latex condoms, make sure you use a water-based lube as oil-based lubes can cause the condom to break.

Ideas for discussion

What do you think about having sex with and without a condom? You may not have thought about it much before, so here are some questions to think about yourself or discuss in your group.

1. What is the attitude of your friends, parents and wider community to condoms? Why do you think people talk about them positively or negatively?

FACILITATORS' NOTES

Groups might talk about condoms being viewed as part of a healthy sex life, and see them as a way to have sex without worry. Similarly they might talk about parents and teachers as encouraging condom use, as a way to be sensible and keep safe.

Negative attitudes around condoms might be based on the idea that they reduce the pleasure of sex. Groups may raise the idea that condoms are sometimes seen as a sign that someone is promiscuous. This should be challenged – anyone can get STIs whether it's your first time or your hundredth.

2. Are there any traditions, attitudes, or practical reasons that prevent young people using condoms where you live?

FACILITATORS' NOTES

Practical reasons might include a lack of knowledge about where to get condoms, having to travel to get them if they can't be sourced locally or issues around cost. They might also worry about being seen buying condoms. Girls may also assume that the guy is responsible for having the condom.

Depending on the setting, groups may discuss being under pressure to be abstinent or highlight negative attitudes towards sex held by their community, meaning that condoms may be less available, or trying to access them might be met with judgement.

3. What do you think are some of the reasons that men may not want to use a condom? And women?

FACILITATORS' NOTES

Groups may give 'condoms are uncomfortable' as a reason that people don't want to use a condom. Let them know that finding a condom uncomfortable may be a sign that you are using the wrong size. They might also say that some people think that condoms reduce the pleasure of sex. In this case talk about how some condoms have been designed to increase pleasure, including ribbed condoms, extra thin condoms, flavoured condoms, etc.

They might suggest that some people believe condoms are not necessary – either they don't think they are at risk of STIs or they think other methods such as 'pulling out' work instead. Note that pulling out is not an effective means of protection.

Others may worry that asking to use a condom would suggest that they are unfaithful or don't trust their partner or that it would suggest they are promiscuous.

4. What do you think are some of the risks of having sex without a condom? Are there any benefits?

FACILITATORS' NOTES

Discussions should note pregnancy and STIs as a risk of not using a condom, and reflect on the peace of mind that using a condom can provide – not having to worry about either of these things.

Groups might also explore long term benefits of avoiding pregnancy/STIs i.e. avoiding unwanted pregnancy means that girls can finish their education; preventing HIV infection means not having to take life-long treatment.

Reasons the group might put forward for not using a condom might include expense (but talk to the groups about where they can access free or cheap condoms locally). They might also think of condoms as 'ruining the moment' (but talk to them about how some couples might try and make putting on a condom part of the fun).

5. When do you think young people are more likely to have sex without a condom?

FACILITATORS' NOTES

Groups may talk about situations when they are less in control, for example when drunk or under pressure from the other person to have sex without a condom. They might also talk about situations in which sex is unplanned, meaning they might not have a condom with them, or might realise too late that it is out of date.

In some circumstances, couples may choose not to use a condom, perhaps if they are trying to get pregnant. Or if they are in a monogamous relationship and both partners have had a full sexual health check, they might decide to use another form of contraceptive instead. It should be noted that they still risk getting STIs if either partner is unfaithful.

Consider all the situations, whether the reasons are good and whether certain situations could have been avoided.

6. Is it a good idea to carry condoms with you when you go out? Why? Why not?

FACILITATORS' NOTES

Respect all answers, but make sure the group reflects on the benefits. Highlight that carrying a condom means you will always have one if you need it and won't be in a situation where you have to find one or borrow one.

Groups may worry that other people will find the condoms and will judge them for having them. If groups raise this as a concern talk with them about whether they think this is a good reason? Is being found with condoms worse than having an STI or having an unwanted pregnancy?