

Condom protocol

A guide to providing condoms to young people at your service



The decisions young people make about their sexual health can have a profound impact on their lives.

You don't need to be an expert in sexual health. But as a worker, you are in a great position to give young people the knowledge they need to make informed decisions and the skills to use condoms correctly.

Making condoms available to young people is one of the easiest and most effective things you can do to protect their health – and the health of our population.

What this guide covers:

This guide covers the ins and outs of providing condoms to young people, legal considerations and strategies for implementing condom distribution at your service.

The guide contains the following sections:

1. Things to think about before making condoms available
2. How to talk about condoms
3. Where to get condoms
4. When to get condoms
5. How to use condoms
6. How young people can negotiate using a condom
7. Myths and facts about condoms
8. Tips for young people on having fun with condoms
9. Things you need to know about providing condoms at your service
10. Steps for providing free condoms at your service

Section 1

Things for your organisation to think about before making condoms available

- Is there **managerial support** for supplying condoms?
- Does your service understand its **duty of care to young people** and **mandatory requirements** for sexual activity and consent?
- Is there a **commitment and capacity among staff** to source, supply, monitor and refill condom supplies?
- Does your service understand **the importance of providing information** about relationships and reproductive and sexual health when providing condoms?
- Does your service provide a welcoming, inclusive, friendly and non-judgemental service, whatever the client's **culture, gender or sexuality**?
- Is your service able to display supportive sexual health resources appropriate to your client group?

Section 2

How to talk about condoms

Talking about condoms with young people takes practice, but you will build confidence over time.

Be opportunistic and look for good moments to talk about condoms. Having free condoms available can help initiate these conversations.

Find out what young people already know about condoms. Ask about condom myths or any barriers they may have to using a condom. This can provide you with a chance to give the facts and provide further information.

Here are some ways you might start a conversation about condoms:

- “Did you notice we now have free condoms available?”
- “What are some things you have heard about condom use?”
- “What prevents you from using or accessing condoms?”
- “There are many services that provide free condoms. Do you know who or where they are?”
- “You mentioned you have a new partner. Did you know our service provides free condoms?”
- “Our service provides free condoms. I can show you a demonstration on how to use a condom correctly if you would like.”
- “Did you know that condoms come in many sizes, flavours and colours?”

Section 3

Where to get condoms

You can buy condoms from supermarkets, chemists, convenience stores and petrol stations. But they are available free at sexual health clinics, youth health services, Family Planning NSW clinics – and possibly your service.

Your service can sign up to be a **condom credit card provider**. This means you can provide free condoms from Family Planning NSW for young people who attend your service.

It also means you can register to be on the free [condom locator app](#). The mobile phone app allows young people to locate free condoms from participating services across NSW.

The app promotes safe sex and includes information on how to use condoms, contraception, STIs and referral for testing. It is available on the [App Store](#) and [Google Play](#).

You can find out more about the program at fpnsw.org.au/ccc

If you would like to buy condoms online, see condomsales.com.au

Section 4

When to use condoms

Condoms, female condoms and dams can provide some protection from sexually transmitted infections.

Condoms

Condoms are suitable for many types of sex performed on a penis, including anal, vaginal and oral sex.

Condoms are recommended for use on sex toys that are being shared.

Condoms are recommended for any casual or new sexual partners and can also be used in longer-term relationships.

Dams

A dam is a stretchable latex rectangle. It can be used for oral sex performed on a vulva or anus.

Female condoms

Female condoms are made from a non-latex material, so they are perfect for people who have latex or rubber allergies. They can be placed into the vagina at any time before intercourse as a female-controlled form of protection.

You can find female condoms at some chemists, Family Planning NSW and condomsales.com.au

Section 5

How to use condoms

Step 1 Consent from partner

Consent can be given and taken away at any time.



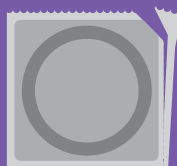
Step 2 Check the expiry date.

You don't want to use an expired condom as it may break.



Step 3 Open the condom packet carefully and remove condom.

Don't use your teeth or scissors, and be careful of sharp nails – you don't want to tear the condom.



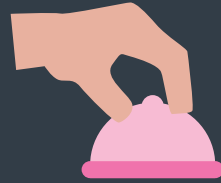
Step 4 Check condom is around the right way for unrolling

Make sure the condom isn't inside out. If you roll it on inside out, it could have some sexual fluids on it, like pre-cum. The best thing is to grab another one and start again.



Step 5 Squeeze tip of condom to remove air.

This reduces friction and the chance of it breaking.

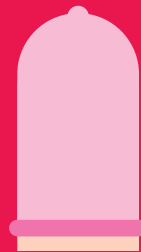


Step 6 While holding the tip, place condom on top of penis/toy/etc.



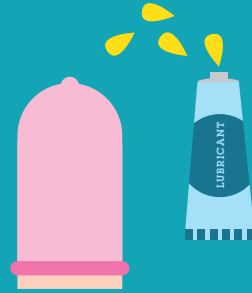
Step 7 Roll condom down the entire length of penis/toy/etc.

Roll the condom down to the base of the erect penis, toy etc.



Step 8 Apply water based lubricant.

This will reduce the risk of the condom breaking and can increase pleasure. This step is recommended for anal sex. Do not use oil-based lubricants such as Vaseline – these can cause the condom to break.

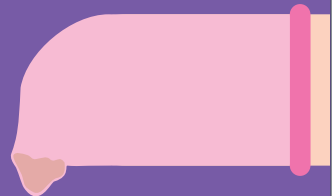


Step 9 Sexy times!

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Step 10 Hold base of condom while withdrawing.

Withdraw the penis while erect. Hold the base as you don't want it to slip off.



Step 11 Remove the condom, tie a knot in it and put it in the bin.



See the **condom card game** and **condom demonstration** activities in the resource kit to explore effective condom use with young people

Section 6

How young people can negotiate using a condom

Some sexually active young people may not want to use condoms. Barriers include a lack of understanding, incorrect advice, comfort, access, affordability, cultural or religious reasons, other contraceptive use, or their relationship status.

When discussing condom use with young people, be aware that not all young people will have the same barriers influencing them.

Here are some ways young people can negotiate using a condom with a partner:

They say: I'm on the pill.

You say: That's great, but that won't protect against STIs.

They say: I'll pull out with plenty of time.

You say: As soon as you're in, it might be too late.

They say: They don't make condoms big enough for me.

You say: Don't worry, they stretch.

They say: We're monogamous; we don't need them.

You say: How about we get tested first.

They say: I don't have a condom.

You say: OK, let's go get some.

They say: I'm allergic to latex.

You say: We can buy latex-free condoms

Section 7

Myths and facts about condoms

There are lots of myths about condoms.
Make sure young people know the facts.

MYTH: It's safer if you use two condoms.

TRUTH: Whether it's two male condoms or a male and female condom, using two condoms is not better than one – they are more likely to break.

MYTH: Condoms break easily.

TRUTH: No they don't – they're pretty strong and stretchy. However, condoms need to be put on carefully by ensuring there are no air bubbles, sharp fingernails, jewellery or teeth that may break them.

MYTH: Condoms are the only type of contraception that young people need to think about.

TRUTH: Condoms can provide protection from STIs and unplanned pregnancy. But for the best protection it's a good idea to use other forms of contraception as well. Options include an implant, diaphragm, injection, IUD or the pill.

MYTH: When using condoms you need extra lube and Vaseline is good.

TRUTH: Condoms already have some lubricant on them. Anything with oil in it can damage condoms, including baby oil, Vaseline, hand cream and lipstick or lip-gloss.

If extra lube is required (recommended for anal sex), use a water-based lubricant, such as KY jelly or Durex Play. These are available from a pharmacy or supermarket.

MYTH: Condoms lessen the sensation of sex.

TRUTH: Condoms can make some men last longer before they ejaculate. There are lots of different sizes, shapes, colours, textures and flavours of condoms.

Using a condom can allow for a more relaxed sexual experience without having to worry about STIs or unplanned pregnancy.

MYTH: If a female is on the pill you don't need to worry about condoms.

TRUTH: The pill won't protect young people from STIs. If a female forgets to take a pill, has been sick or has been using certain antibiotics, the effectiveness of the pill is lower and this may increase the chance of pregnancy occurring.

MYTH: Condoms can cut off circulation to the penis.

TRUTH: A condom can stretch to 18 inches in circumference and won't cut off circulation when used correctly. Condoms also come in larger sizes if fit is a problem.

MYTH: People might think that their partner will think less of them if they ask them to use a condom.

TRUTH: Asking someone to use a condom shows you know how to take care of and respect yourself and others.

MYTH: You don't need to use condoms having oral sex.

TRUTH: It's a good idea to use a condom (or a dam for oral sex on a vulva or anus) for oral sex as gonorrhoea, chlamydia and herpes can be passed on this way.

MYTH: You have to be 16 to buy condoms.

TRUTH: There is no age limit preventing the purchase of condoms at a pharmacy, or from getting medical advice about contraception without parental consent.

MYTH: If you are sleeping with 'nice' people then you won't need a condom.

TRUTH: The way someone looks is no indicator of whether they have an STI or not. It's also important to remember that many STIs don't have any symptoms, so people can infect one another without even knowing it.

MYTH: It's good to keep a condom in your wallet so you're always prepared.

TRUTH: This is a good idea for short periods of time and unplanned moments. However, keeping condoms in wallets for an extended period of time can weaken the condom by exposing it to heat and friction. Condoms need to be stored away from heat and sunlight.

MYTH: If you use condoms you will be safe from all STIs.

TRUTH: Condoms won't fully protect you from the spread of herpes or genital warts as these are passed on from contact with infected skin. However, if the condom covers the infected skin, they can reduce the risk of transmission.

MYTH: Condoms ruin 'the mood'.

TRUTH: Nothing ruins the mood like STIs or unintended pregnancy. Using condoms can be part of fun, enjoyable sex.

Section 8

Tips for young people on having fun with condoms

There are many brands, textures, colours and flavours of condoms. Condoms are latex or non-latex. You can suggest that young people try different styles.

Apart from their intended purpose, there are plenty of ways to have fun with condoms.

They are stronger than you think and can stretch pretty far, which also helps to dispel the myth that condoms break so easily or are too small.

Banana Drama – This is all about practising technique with some added speed. Get some bananas (either real ones or plastic ones) and see who can put a condom on correctly over it the fastest and most importantly without breaking it!

The Orange Test – Condoms stretch! To test this, get young people to see how many oranges they can stack into a condom before it breaks.

Full of Hot Air – Blow condoms up like balloons.

Water Bombs – Check out how strong condoms are by filling them with water.

See the **condom games and condom couture** activities in the resource kit.

Section 9

Things you need to know about providing condoms at your service

Giving condoms to young people is legal Under Section 34 (1) of the *Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act* Gazette No 115 of 18 December, page 4178, (2015), these people can distribute condoms for a public health purpose:

- employees or volunteers at a non-government organisation funded, or partially funded, by a public health organisation
- state and local government agencies
- the Ministry of Health.

This covers many workers. But it's always a good idea to discuss this with your management team as many services have their own policies.

There is no age limit around giving out condoms There are no laws restricting young people's access to many services, including the distribution of condoms.

Anyone can buy condoms from a supermarket or pharmacy without being asked for ID to prove their age.

The legal age for sexual consent in NSW is 16 years, regardless of the person's gender or the gender of their partner(s).

Before providing condoms, try to have a discussion that includes information on how to use a condom correctly and ensure any sex the person may have is consensual.

Not all young people have sex, but condoms can protect those who do

A national survey of Australian secondary students in 2013 showed that 23% of year 10 students and 50% of year 12 students had engaged in at least one act of sexual intercourse.

While it may seem like all young people are having sex, these figures show otherwise.

For young people choosing to have sex, providing condoms will allow them to practice safe sex. It will also reduce their risk of contracting an STI or experiencing an unplanned pregnancy.

What should you do if a young person says the condom broke or slipped off during sex? A condom breaking or slipping off during sex puts people at risk of two main things – STIs and/or unplanned pregnancy.

Unplanned pregnancy – If there is a risk of unplanned pregnancy, females have the option of accessing emergency contraception pill. This can be taken up to four or five days after unprotected sex, but it is more effective the earlier it is taken. It is not 100% effective.

You can buy the emergency contraceptive pill without a prescription at your local pharmacy or from Family Planning NSW clinics.

STI risks – If someone has ever had unprotected sex, recently changed sexual partners or if a condom broke during sex, they and their partner(s) should have an STI test. STI tests can be carried out at NSW sexual health clinics, Family Planning NSW clinics or at GPs.

HIV risk – If you are worried about getting HIV after unprotected sex you should get help straightaway. There is medication you can take, but it must be started within 72 hours. For more information, call the PEP Hotline on 1800 737 669.

Providing condoms does not encourage young people to have more sex Many studies show that young people who receive sex education are more likely to delay having sex. When they do become sexually active, they are more likely to have fewer partners and use condoms and other contraceptive methods.

Studies confirm that young people accessing condoms do not necessarily have more sex, but they are more likely to use condoms.

Free condoms are just another personal hygiene resource Just as your service may provide personal hygiene products for people, condoms are another resource you can offer. Services that provide free condoms to young people report that these are not taken advantage of.

Your complaints process is there to handle parents and carers concerns Your service is likely to have a general complaints process in place. Follow this process if any complaints are made.

If you need assistance with your response, your local health district is available to discuss and assist you.

There is education and training available for workers Many local health districts offer training in collaboration with a variety of peak bodies, including Yfoundations and Family Planning NSW.

If you would like to know more about training available in your area, contact your local health district, HARP Unit or the NSW STIPU.

Support is available to handle any media questions There is plenty of information about the proven effectiveness and cost benefit of free condom distribution programs.

Your local HARP Unit is able to assist your service in constructing a response if any media interest is generated.

If young people ask more questions, use it as an opportunity Continue the discussion about sexual health, and answer their questions as best you can, with openness and honesty.

If you are unsure of the answer, you can find out. Try to appear confident and not easily embarrassed. Restate the question and model correct terminology; and check for understanding in a one-on-one situation.

Ask: “Does that answer your question?” or “Is that what you wanted to know?” Remember, you don’t have to be an expert.

Nurse Nettie, is an online service that can also answer questions. See www.playsafe.health.nsw.gov.au/ask-nurse-nettie

More information

Youth workers do not need to know everything about sexual health to provide effective support to young people

You are in a unique position to design or identify opportunities to communicate key messages to young people about their sexual health. See the **key sexual health messages** fact sheet in the resource kit.

Clinical knowledge can change overtime and there are many sources of authoritative information for workers and young people. These include:

Play Safe and **Body Talk** also provide information about sexual health and young people. See www.playsafe.health.nsw.gov.au and www.bodytalk.org.au

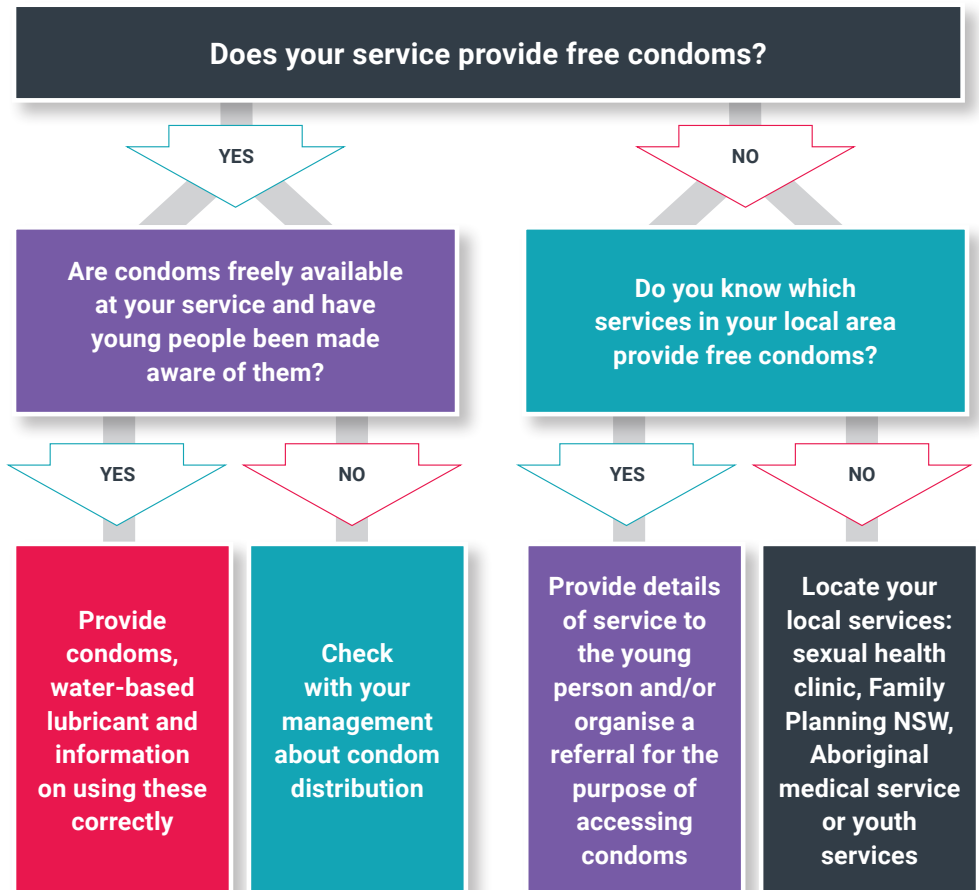
The Sexual Health Infolink is an online information and referral service and is staffed by specialist sexual health nurses. Call 1800 451 624, weekdays 9am to 5.30pm, or see www.shil.nsw.gov.au

Family Planning NSW Talkline provides free and confidential information and advice on reproductive and sexual health issues. Call 1300 658 886, weekdays 8.30am to 5pm, or see www.fpnsw.org.au/talkline

Your local sexual health clinic is listed at www.health.nsw.gov.au

Section 10

Steps for providing free condoms at your service





THIS RESOURCE IS PART OF THE NSW SEXUAL HEALTH PROMOTION
FRAMEWORK WHICH IS FOCUSSED ON IMPROVING THE SEXUAL
HEALTH OF YOUNG PEOPLE ACROSS DIFFERENT SETTINGS.

**FOR MORE YOUTH SEXUAL HEALTH TOOL KIT RESOURCE, PLEASE VISIT
PRO.PLAYSAFE.HEALTH.NSW.GOV.AU**