

CONDOM PROTOCOL

A guide to providing condoms to young people at your service



INTRODUCTION

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

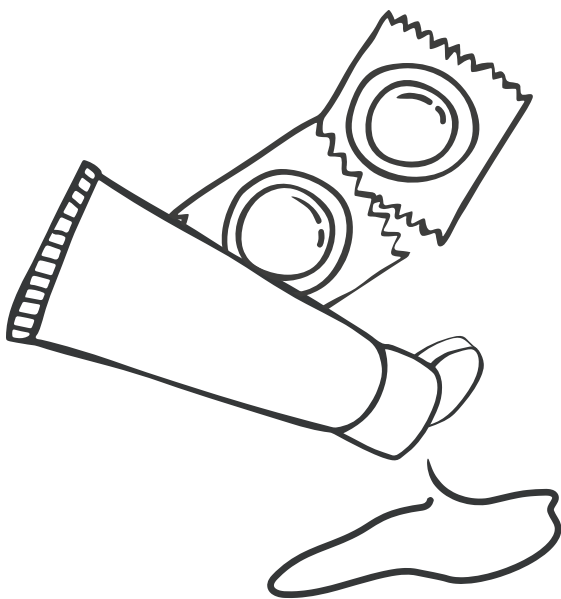
Making condoms available to young people at your service is one of the easiest and most effective things you can do to protect their health.

Consistent use of condoms prevents the transmission of sexually transmissible infections (STIs) and unplanned pregnancy.

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. Increasing access to condoms allows young people to feel empowered to take charge of their sexual health.

What this guide covers:

This guide covers strategies for providing condoms to young people at your service, including legal considerations and ways to implement condom distribution.



The guide contains the following sections:

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

SECTION 1

Things for your organisation to think about before making condoms available at your service

Information for managers and gaining executive support

The distribution of condoms is an evidence-based and an effective way of preventing the transmission of sexually transmissible infections (STIs) and unplanned pregnancy among young people in NSW. Condoms are readily available for young people to purchase, however, many young people report cost as a major barrier to using them. Young people report wanting to access sexual health information and materials from a range of services they access. Make sure you have executive support to provide condoms within your service.

Duty of care and mandatory requirements

As professionals, it is important to be aware of and follow your duty of care and mandatory reporting requirements in NSW, particularly in regard to reports of sexual activity under the age of 16, violence and assault. Make sure staff are familiar with their duty of care to young people, including [mandatory reporting requirements](#), if condoms are to be provided at your service.

Know where staff can access further information on sexual and reproductive and referral options

In order to support the provision of condoms, it's important staff are also able to provide information about consent, safe sex and relationships and link young people in with health services when needed. Trusted and reliable information from NSW Health is available [here](#) and free sexual and reproductive health online training is available [here](#).

Commit to source, supply, monitor and refill condom supplies

Ensuring a consistent supply of condoms and lubricant is available at your service is important. This involves making sure all condoms are in-date and ordering new supplies when numbers are low. A bag of 144 NSW Health Play Safe branded condoms and lubricant can be ordered once a month [here](#). Make sure someone is regularly checking stock levels.

Create a welcoming, inclusive, friendly and non-judgemental space

Creating an environment at your service where young people feel safe, respected, and comfortable in being themselves and expressing all aspects of their identities is important. You can order a range of free health resources from [Play Safe Pro](#) including, posters and activities that will help create safe, welcoming and friendly environments for health discussions.



SECTION 2

Legal considerations on providing condoms at your service

Making condoms available to young people is legal and effective health promotion

Under Section 34 (1) of the Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act Gazette No 115 of 18 December, page 4178, (2015), the following 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 health services and materials, 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 consent.

If young people are having sex, or thinking about having sex, it is essential they have all the information and materials (including condoms) they need to make safe, healthy and informed decisions. healthy and informed decisions.



SECTION 3

Steps for providing free condoms at your service

Once you have executive and staff support to provide condoms at your service, you can place an online order for a free bag of 144 Play Safe branded condoms and lubricant from NSW Health at [Play Safe Pro](#) which will be delivered to your service. You can sign up to receive a one-off order, or you can sign up for a free subscription where one bag will be delivered every month.

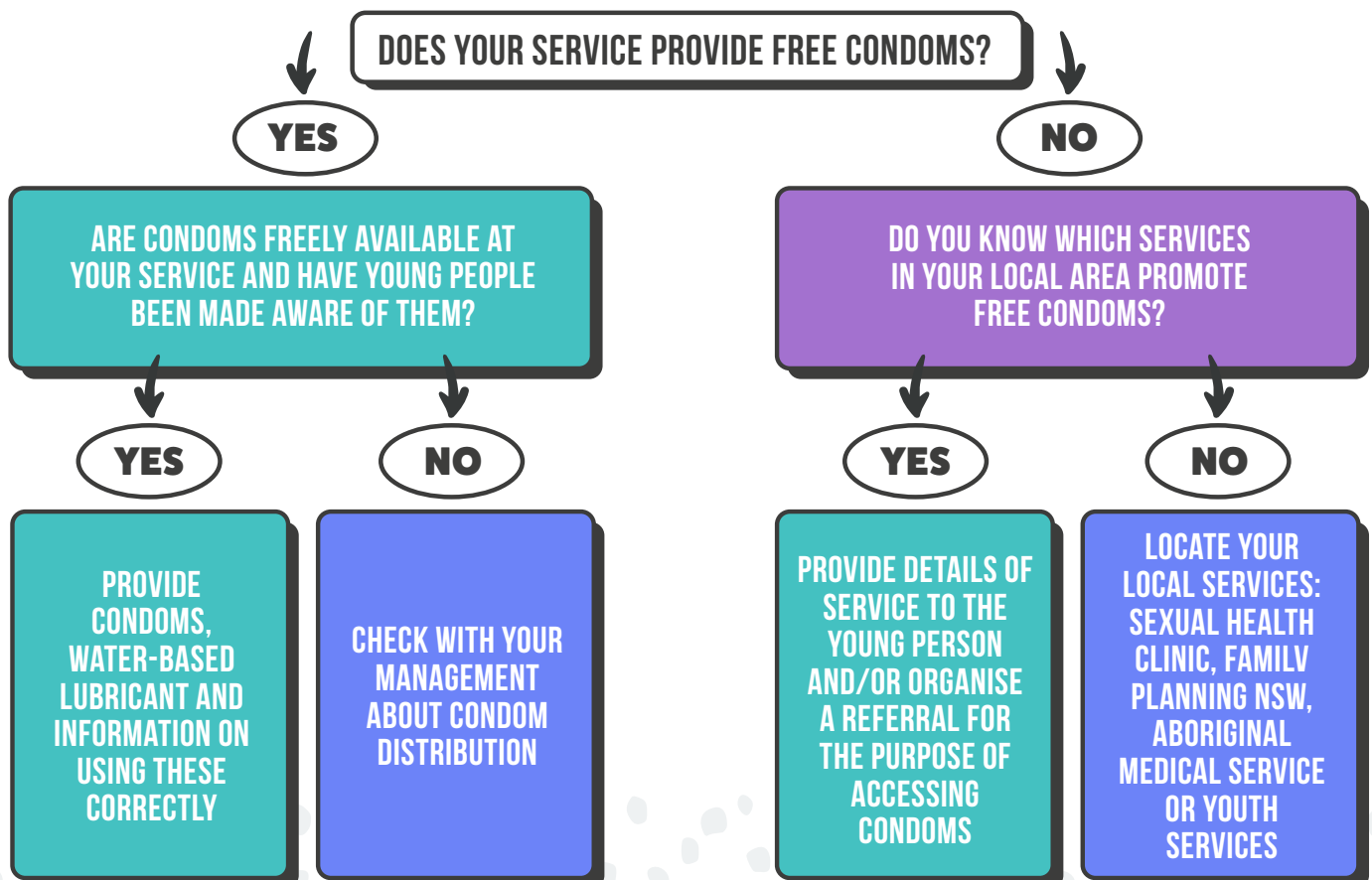
Play Safe Pro's condom ordering tool is a free service to help service providers and organisations working with young people, it is not for individual use. By placing an order you agree to NSW Health potentially contacting your service to offer additional sexual health information and support.

The program is for services in NSW only, deliveries cannot be made outside NSW. For condom availability in other states in Australia, please contact your local sexual health service or state health department.

Once your condom delivery has arrived, let young people know your organisation provides free condoms by displaying [Play Safe Pro's](#) promotional material, including:

- posters
- stickers
- games and activities.

Check out this easy to follow flow chart for what to do when a young person asks if condoms are available at your service.



SECTION 4

Things you need to know about providing condoms at your service: Common questions or concerns

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

The [7th National Survey of Australian Secondary Students and Sexual Health \(2022\)](#) reported that 60.6% of young people aged 14-18 years of age were sexually active (defined as having experienced oral, vaginal or anal sex).

For young people choosing to have sex, providing condoms will allow them to practice safe sex.

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 have more sex, but they are more likely to use condoms.

If young people ask 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?" or "I am not sure, how about we find out together?"

The Sexual Health Infolink is an online information and referral service and is staffed by specialist sexual health nurses that can also answer questions. You can call them Monday – Friday to find out any answer you need. www.shil.nsw.gov.au

What should you do if a young person says the condom broke or slipped off during sex?

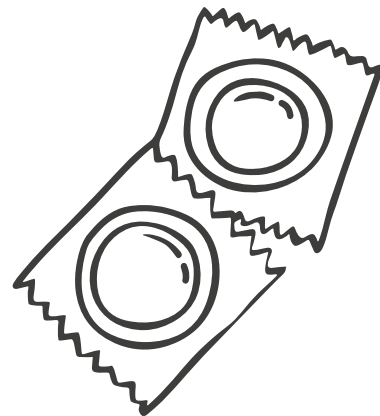
A condom breaking or slipping off during sex increases the possibility of STIs and/or unplanned pregnancy (for sex that can result in pregnancy).

If there is a risk of unplanned pregnancy, young people have the option of accessing the emergency contraception pill. This can be taken up to five days after unprotected sex, but it is more effective the earlier it is taken.

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

If a young person is worried about getting HIV after unprotected sex there is medication that can be taken within 72 hours of the risk event. For more information, call the [PEP Hotline](#) on 1800 737 669.

In general, after sex without a condom, or if the condom broke, it is a good idea to get a sexual health check two weeks after the event.



SECTION 4

Things you need to know about providing condoms at your service: Common concerns

Ensure you provide lubricant with condoms

Condoms should be provided with lubricant. Lube can help prevent the condom breaking and can provide greater enjoyment.

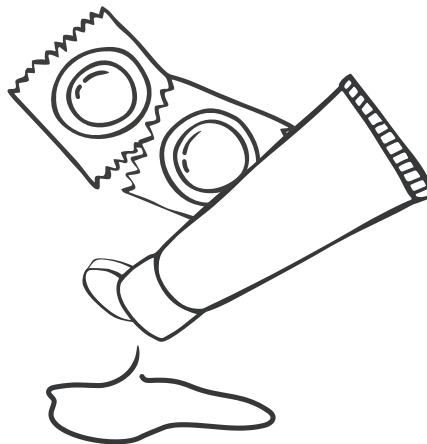
Regularly check condom expiry dates

All condoms provided will have an approximate 5 year expiry date from the time of manufacture. Regularly check the expiry date of the condoms being provided at your service to ensure they are in date.

What to do if you get concerns from the wider community and /or media

There is plenty of evidence-based information about the effectiveness and cost benefit of free condom distribution programs.

If you need any assistance responding to a complaint about your service providing condoms to young people, support is available from your Local Health District Health Promotion Unit. Please email: playsafe@health.nsw.gov.au.



SECTION 5

Information for staff on sexual and reproductive health

Play Safe Pro has a range of tools, games and factsheets to support the distribution of condoms at your service.

Trainings

Free training on sexual and reproductive health is available at [Play Safe Pro](#).

Because You Care

A self-paced training covering sexual health promotion through a trauma informed care lens.

Designed for foster carers and informal carers, this training takes you through conversation starters in a safe and inviting way.

Sticky Stuff Online

Designed by Yfoundations, Sticky Stuff Online aims to increase your confidence, knowledge and skills on sexual health to prepare you for conversations with young people.

Nitty Gritty Online

Designed by Family Planning NSW, this self-paced training covers communication strategies, health literacy, consent, STIs and contraception. It has all you need to know for sexual and reproductive health promotion with young people.

Referral links

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

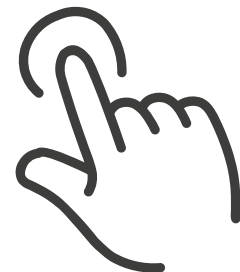
Family Planning NSW Talkline

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

Play Safe provides information about sexual health and young people. See www.playsafe.health.nsw.gov.au

Your local sexual health clinic

is listed at www.health.nsw.gov.au



SECTION 6

How to talk about and promote condoms in your service

Having free condoms available and sexual and reproductive health resources, information or material on display can help initiate opportunistic conversations.

You can order a range of free resources, information and material directly from [Play Safe Pro](#).

When talking to young people about sexual health, including condoms, you can start by finding out what they already know.

Ask about condom myths or any barriers they may have to accessing condoms. This can provide you with a chance to give the facts and provide further information.

NSW Health's [Play Safe Pro](#) website has a range of myth verse fact quizzes and activities you can use to start the conversation.



DID YOU NOTICE WE NOW HAVE FREE CONDOMS AVAILABLE?

WHAT ARE SOME THINGS YOU HAVE HEARD ABOUT CONDOMS?

WHAT PREVENTS YOU FROM USING OR ACCESSING CONDOMS?

THERE ARE MANY SERVICES THAT PROVIDE FREE CONDOMS. DO YOU KNOW WHO OR WHERE THEY ARE?

OUR SERVICE PROVIDES FREE CONDOMS. I CAN SHOW YOU A DEMONSTRATION ON HOW TO USE A CONDOM CORRECTLY IF YOU WOULD LIKE.

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

YOU MENTIONED YOU HAVE A NEW PARTNER. DID YOU KNOW OUR SERVICE PROVIDES FREE CONDOMS?

DID YOU KNOW THAT CONDOMS COME IN MANY SIZES, FLAVOURS AND COLOURS?

SECTION 7

How to use condoms

Use this step by step guide to educate young people on how to use condoms correctly. [Play Safe Pro's](#) website has a condom card game you can play with young people in group settings to ensure they know all the steps involved.

Step 1

Ask for consent

Consent is always needed before hooking up and having sex. Consent can be given and taken away at any time, so make sure you check in regularly.



Step 2

Check the expiry date

Condoms expire! Make sure you check the expiry date on the back of the packet as an expired condom is more likely to break.



Step 3

Open the condom packet carefully

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 the right way up

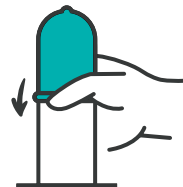
Condoms only roll on one way. Make sure it's the right way up. If you try to roll it the wrong way, chuck it out and start again with a new one.



Step 5

Pinch the tip of condom to roll down

Pinching the tip of the condom removes air and reduces friction.



SECTION 7

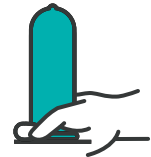
How to use condoms

Use this step by step guide to educate young people on how to use condoms correctly. [Play Safe Pro's](#) website has a condom card game you can play with young people in group settings to ensure they know all the steps involved.

Step 6

Roll condom down the entire length of penis/toy

Roll the condom down to the base of the erect penis or toy.



Step 7

Apply water-based lubricant

Have some fun with water-based lube. This will reduce the risk of the condom breaking and can increase pleasure.



Step 8

Check in again, and you're good to go!

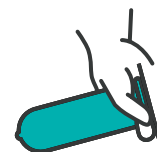
Check in with your partner again, and once you have their consent – you're good to go!



Step 9

Hold the base of the condom while withdrawing

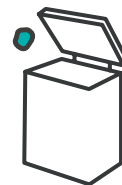
Once you're both finished, withdraw the penis or toy while erect (hard). Hold the base of the condom so that it doesn't fall off.



Step 10

Take off the condom and throw it in the bin

Take off the condom, tie it in a knot and chuck it in the bin. Don't flush it down the toilet, as you might need to call a plumber and have it unblocked!



SECTION 8

How young people can negotiate using a condom

Barriers to using condoms can include a lack of understanding, incorrect advice, comfort, access, affordability, cultural or religious reasons, other contraceptive use, or relationship status.

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

We have pulled together some common conversations to encourage condom use.

**THEY SAY: I'M ON THE PILL.
YOU SAY: THAT'S GREAT, BUT THAT
WON'T PROTECT AGAINST STIs.**

**THEY SAY: I DON'T HAVE A CONDOM.
YOU SAY: OK, LET'S GO GET SOME.**

**THEY SAY: I'LL PULL OUT WITH
PLENTY OF TIME.
YOU SAY: AS SOON AS YOU'RE IN,
IT MIGHT BE TOO LATE.**

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

**THEY SAY: WE'RE MONOGAMOUS;
WE DON'T NEED THEM.
YOU SAY: HOW ABOUT
WE GET TESTED FIRST.**

**THEY SAY: THEY DON'T MAKE
CONDOMS BIG ENOUGH FOR ME.
YOU SAY: DON'T WORRY, THEY STRETCH.**

**THEY SAY: I'M ALLERGIC TO LATEX.
YOU SAY: WE CAN GET
LATEX-FREE CONDOMS.**

SECTION 9

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.

FACT No, it's not. 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.

FACT 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, jewelry or teeth that may break them.

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

FACT 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.

FACT 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. Instead, use a water-based lubricant. These are available from a pharmacy or supermarket.

MYTH Condoms lessen the sensation of sex.

FACT 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.

FACT 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.

FACT A condom can stretch to 18 inches in circumference and won't cut off circulation when used correctly. Condoms also come in larger sizes.

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

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

SECTION 9

Myths and facts about condoms

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

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

FACT 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.

FACT 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.

FACT The way someone looks is not an 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 pass them on without even knowing it.

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

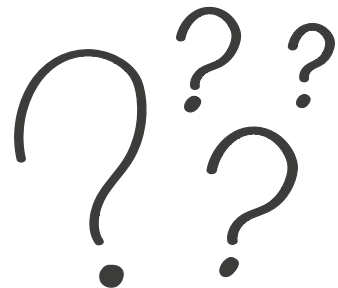
FACT This is a good idea for short periods of time and unplanned moments. However, keeping condoms in wallets for an extended period of time can weaken the condom by exposing it to heat and friction. Condoms need to be stored away from heat and sunlight.

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

FACT 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'.

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



SECTION 10

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. See how far they stretch before they break.

Water Bombs

Check out how strong condoms are by filling them with water. This can be a great game to play in summer months, though please make sure you pick up and dispose of all rubbish.

For more youth sexual health resources, please visit pro.playsfe.health.nsw.gov

