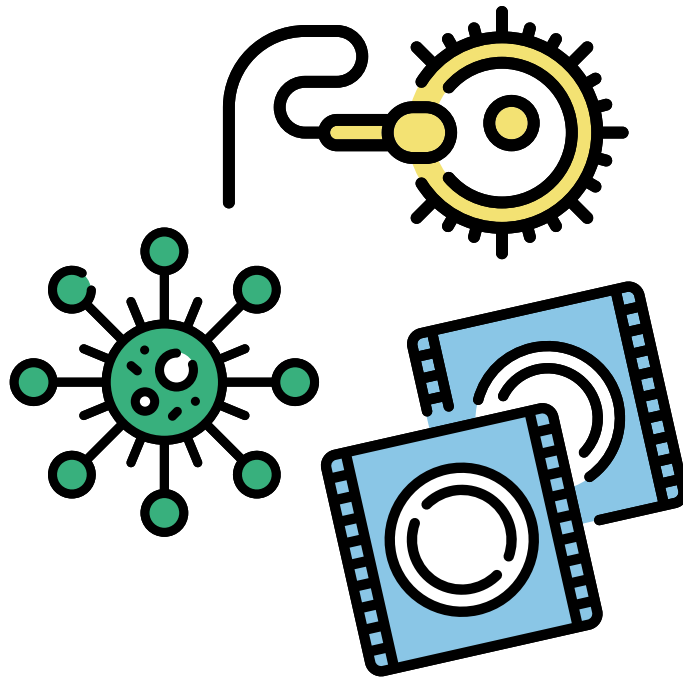


# Preventing sexually transmitted infections (STIs)



When you have sex with someone, there is a chance of getting sexually transmitted infections (STIs) or giving someone STIs. This information sheet is about how to protect yourself and the people you have sex with from STIs.



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Conseil d'information & d'éducation sexuelles du Canada

# What are sexually transmitted infections (STIs)?

STIs are infections that are passed from one person to another during sexual activity.

Sexual activity can include:		
	<b>Penis-vagina sex</b>	When one person's penis goes inside someone else's vagina
	<b>Penis-anal sex</b>	When one person's penis goes inside someone else's anus (butthole)
	<b>Oral sex</b>	When one person puts their mouth on the penis, vagina, or anus of another person
	<b>Sharing sex toys</b>	When more than one person is using the same sex toy

In some cases, STIs can be passed to another person through skin-to-skin contact or contact with another person's bodily fluids (like blood or fluid from the vagina or penis).

STIs can also be passed from one person to another if they are sharing needles for tattoos, piercings, or drugs.

**STIs can hurt your health so it is important to lower your risk of getting STIs. Using condoms during sexual activity with another person will make it less likely that you will get an STI.**

You can learn more about STIs here: <https://www.sexandu.ca/stis/>

# How to lower your risk of getting an STI when you have sex with someone

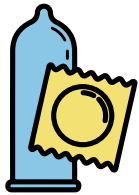
## Use a condom every time you have penis-vagina sex or penis-anal sex

There are 2 types of condoms:

- **External condom:** Condom that goes on the outside of the penis

Here is a video to learn about using an external condom:

<https://teachingsexualhealth.ca/teachers/resource/using-a-condom-video/>



- **Internal condom:** Condom that goes inside the vagina or inside the rectum (butthole)

Here is a video to learn about using an internal condom

in a vagina: <https://teachingsexualhealth.ca/teachers/resource/using-a-vaginal-condom/>

You can buy condoms at a pharmacy or sex store. You can sometimes get condoms for free from health centres and doctors' offices.

**Using lubricant or “lube”:** Lubricant or “lube” is a liquid or gel that you can use during sex to make it easier to use condoms and to make sex more enjoyable.



Use water-based or silicone lube with condoms. Do not use anything with oil, because that could cause the condom to break.

You can buy lube at a pharmacy or sex store.

**Sensory sensitivities:** For some people, sensory sensitivities can make using condoms uncomfortable. For example, some people may not like the feeling, taste, or sound of a condom.



To make the use of condoms more comfortable, you can try different flavoured condoms, use lube with condoms, or use noise-cancelling headphones/ear plugs during sex with a condom.

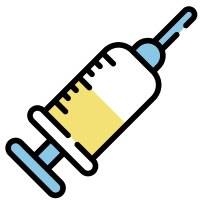
## Use a condom or a dental dam for oral sex



A dental dam is a special sheet that you can put between one person's mouth and the other person's vagina or anus when you are having oral sex to prevent the passing of STIs.

Here is a video to learn about using a dental dam: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O-bRI70cp8E&ab\\_channel=TeachingSexualHealthAlbertaHealthServices](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O-bRI70cp8E&ab_channel=TeachingSexualHealthAlbertaHealthServices)

## Get vaccinated against HPV and hepatitis



HPV and hepatitis are STIs that can be passed from one person to another during sexual activity.

There are vaccines that you could get to protect yourself from getting HPV and hepatitis. Talk to your doctor about getting vaccinated against HPV and hepatitis.

## Get an STI test

**If you are a sexually active person, you should get tested regularly for STIs. Sometimes a person can have an STI and not know because they do not have symptoms. Anybody, at any time, can get an STI test.**

In some cases, you should get an STI test as soon as possible. For example:



- You had sex without condoms.
- You or the person(s) you are having sex with have an STI symptom.
- You know that someone you had sex with has or had an STI.
- You or the person(s) you are having sex with are having sex with other people.
- You or the person(s) you are having sex with have shared needles for drugs, tattooing, or piercing.

# Communicate with the person you want to have sex with about using a condom or dental dam



## When to communicate about using condoms

Communicate with the person you want to have sex with about using condoms **early**. It is important to communicate about using condoms **before** you start having sex.



## How to communicate about using condoms

Here are some things you could say to your partner(s) to let them know you want to use a condom:

- “I want you to know that when I have sex, I always use a condom.”
- “I have condoms with me.”
- “Putting on a condom can be fun. Let us do it together.”

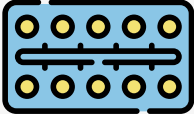
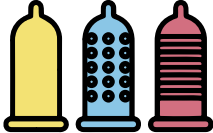


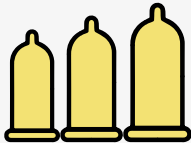



## If the other person does not want to use a condom, do not feel pressured to have sex without a condom

If the other person does not want to use a condom, you do not have to have sex with them.

The person might try to tell you that it is okay to not use a condom. Stick to what you feel safe doing. Do not have sex without a condom if you do not feel comfortable or safe having sex without a condom.

**Here are some things you can say to someone who does not want to use a condom:**

	<b>If the person says:</b>	<b>You can say:</b>
	“I am on the birth control pill so we do not need to use a condom.”	“I want to use a condom anyway so we are protected from infections we do not know about.”
	“I will not enjoy it because I do not like the feeling of a condom.”	“I will not enjoy it if I do not feel safe. If this condom is not comfortable, we can try a different size or brand.”
	“Do you think I have an STI?”	“Sometimes people have STIs and do not know it. It is better to be safe.”
	“Do you not trust me?”	“This is not about trust. It is about protecting each other.”
	“My penis is too big for a condom.”	“There are condoms in bigger sizes. We can find one that will fit your penis.”
	“I’m allergic to condoms.”	“If you are allergic to latex, we can use non-latex condoms.”

**For more support and information about safer sex**

You can text (613-800-6757) or call (1-888-642-2725) Action Canada for Sexual Health & Rights’ access line to ask questions about sexual health, safer sex, and pregnancy options. They can connect you to other sexual health experts. Here is their website: <https://www.actioncanadashr.org/call-access-line-1-888-642-2725>.