

Comparing Condoms

Characteristic	Male Condoms	Female Condoms
How to wear	Rolled on the man's penis. Fits the penis tightly.	Inserted into the woman's vagina. Loosely lines the vagina and does not constrict the penis.
When to put on	Put on erect penis right before sex.	Can be inserted up to 8 hours before sex.
Material	Most made of latex; some of synthetic materials or animal membranes.	Most made of a thin, synthetic film; a few are latex.
How it feels during sex	Change feeling of sex.	Fewer complaints of changed feeling of sex than with male condoms.
Noise during sex	May make a rubbing noise during sex.	May rustle or squeak during sex.
Lubricants to use	Users can add lubricants: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water-based or silicone-based only. • Applied to outside of condom. 	Users can add lubricants: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water-based, silicone-based, or oil-based. • Before insertion, applied to outside of condom. • After insertion, applied to inside of condom or to the penis.
Breakage or slippage	Tend to break more often than female condoms.	Tend to slip more often than male condoms.
When to remove	Require withdrawing from the vagina before the erection subsides.	Can remain in vagina after erection subsides. Requires removal before woman stands.
What it protects	Cover and protect most of the penis, protect the woman's internal genitalia.	Cover both the woman's internal and external genitalia and the base of the penis.
How to store	Store away from heat, light, and dampness.	Plastic condoms are not harmed by heat, light or dampness.
Reuse	Cannot be reused.	Reuse not recommended
Cost and availability	Generally low cost and widely available.	Usually more expensive and less widely available than male condoms

Source: World Health Organization Department of Reproductive Health and Research (WHO/RHR) and Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health/Center for Communication Programs (JHU/CCP), Knowledge for Health Project. *Family Planning: A Global Handbook for Providers (2011 update)*. Baltimore and Geneva: CCP and WHO, 2011.