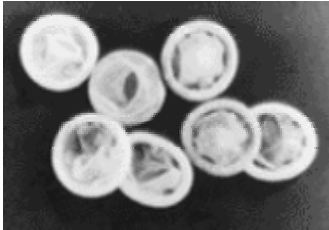




If You Choose an Over-the-Counter Barrier Method...

The Condom...



...you will follow package instructions and cover penis with a condom (sheath made of thin latex or plastic) before intercourse to keep sperm from joining egg.

or

The Female Condom...



...you will follow package instructions and insert a female condom deep in your vagina to keep sperm from joining egg.

or

Spermicide...



...you will follow package instructions and insert spermicide — contraceptive foam, cream, jelly, film, or suppository — deep into your vagina shortly before intercourse to immobilize sperm and keep them from joining egg.

85–98% EFFECTIVE — the condom, nearly 100% with withdrawal

79-95% EFFECTIVE — female condom

71-85% EFFECTIVE — spermicide

Using the spermicide nonoxynol-9 many times a day, by people at risk for HIV, or for anal sex, may irritate tissue and increase the risk of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections.

Latex condoms and the female condom are effective against many sexually transmitted infections — including HIV.

Advantages:

- easy to buy in drugstores, supermarkets, etc.
• can be put on or inserted as part of sex play
• the condom can help relieve premature ejaculation
• erection not necessary to keep female condom in place
• female condoms can be used by people allergic to latex
• external ring of female condom may stimulate clitoris

Possible Disadvantages

Condom

- latex allergies
• loss of sensation
• breakage

Female condom

- may be noisy
• may be difficult to insert
• may irritate vagina, penis
• may slip into vagina during intercourse

Spermicide

- may irritate sex organs
• can be messy

Cost

\$0.50 and up/ condoms — some family planning centers give them away or charge very little

\$2.50/ female condom

\$8/ applicator kits of spermicide foam and jelly (\$4–\$8 refills)

similar prices for creams, films and suppositories



## The Dental Dam

### What is a dental dam?

A dental dam is basically a small sheet of latex which acts as a barrier between the vagina or anus and the mouth. Dental dams get their name because they are used during dental surgery such as root canals. Due to the possible infectious secretions from both the vagina and anus, the dental dam is becoming a more popular safer sex tool. With the introduction of different colors, shapes and sizes, manufacturers are adding some exciting changes to what once was sterile translucent-white latex.

### How effective are dental dams?

Dental dams are an extremely effective means of preventing infection from vaginal or anal secretions. There is little data available on rates of infection after use of the dental dam. There are a few important concerns which may reduce the effectiveness of the barrier. Before you use the dam, lightly rinse it off with warm water. Dry with a towel. Then check to be sure the dam is free of holes or breakage. You can check the dam before you use it by holding it up to light or seeing if water is able to pass through it. Finally, ensure that only one side of the dam comes in contact with the genitals, and that the dam is used only once. Otherwise you are defeating the whole purpose of using the dam in the first place.

Only use water based lubricants (we recommend Astroglide) when using dental dams.

### How do you use dental dams?

Dental dams are not the most difficult piece of protection to use. Some people prefer that the person performing oral sex should hold the dam so that the receiver can just sit back and relax. Others think that the receiver should hold the dam so the other partner has his/her hands free for other stimulation. As an alternative, some dental dams are now made with an adhesive strip which will hold the dam in place. Remember to use some water based lubricant on the vagina or anus beforehand to increase the amount of stimulation received.

### Practical concerns with dental dams

People often approach dental dams with the fear that the normally intense stimulation of the tongue will be lessened by the sheet of latex. The feeling of a dental dam is different than the feeling of a tongue but it does not necessarily make it a bad thing. Use plenty of water based lubricant and one partner can play with the latex in his/her mouth to provide their partner with a new type of stimulation. The use of a dam is up to you. Oral sex is considered to be less dangerous a practice than intercourse, and fellatio is often less dangerous than oral-anal sex. The level of protection you decide to use is your choice, but the safest sex dictates you use a dental dam at all times.