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The Most Ridiculous Excuses People Make for Not Using Condoms

The results from Cosmo's study with Power to Decide

By Julie Vadnal | January 22, 2019



Is it something they did? Do they smell funky? Is latex only cool if a Kardashian wears it in dress form? These and other musings inspired us to grill 18–34 year olds on their condom use—or rather, their alarming lack thereof. A measly 30 percent of men and women wrapped it up the last time they had sex. More shocking findings right this way...

Get this: Nearly 20 million Americans are projected to get an STI this year. That number has skyrocketed lately, despite the fact that there's a proven way to stop the spread: condoms! When used consistently and perfectly, they are highly effective, as you know, at protecting against pregnancy (with 98 percent efficacy) *and* many sexually transmitted pathogens. And yet, for the past four years in a row, the U.S. has consistently broken its own STI records. (The CDC reported that there were 2.3 million diagnoses of chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis in 2017—200,000 more than the previous year.)

It's partly because people just aren't regularly using protection during sex, according to our exclusive survey in partnership with Power to Decide, a nonprofit dedicated to preventing unplanned pregnancy. Sixty-one percent of respondents said they'd use a condom if they knew their partner had an STI,



but...60 percent also admitted they rarely or never use one. Even more concerning: A full 50 percent said they've never—ever—rolled one on.

The Top 3 Reasons 18- to 34-Year-Olds Aren't Wearing Condoms

1. "I'M NOT WORRIED ABOUT STIS."

Excluding women and men who aren't having sex, always use rubbers, or are trying to get pregnant, the top explanation our survey respondents gave is that they aren't concerned about contracting STIs, not even HIV.

While it's true that chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis can typically be treated with antibiotics, the CDC says most cases go undiagnosed and unmedicated, which can lead to side effects like infertility. And FYI: There are still no cures for conditions like herpes or HIV.

2. "MY PARTNER DIDN'T INSIST WE USE ONE."

Thirty-three percent of respondents only use a condom when a partner insists. But 72 percent say they respect a partner who asks to use one. So clearly, it's worth speaking up. "It does require some dialogue," says Mellissa Withers, PhD, associate professor at the University of Southern California's Keck School of Medicine. Make it quick and painless by saying, "Let me grab a condom," as you're about to hook up.

3. "I HATE THROWING THEM AWAY."

Yep, this tiny inconvenience is enough to make some people not want to use a condom at all. What's worse, more *women* than men listed this as an excuse. As Scott Petinga, founder of Rouse condoms, says, there are two people in the room, so use teamwork to get over your squeamishness. Have your guy hold on to the rim of the condom while pulling out (he needs to do it when he's still hard so that semen doesn't escape), then wrap it in a tissue and throw it out.

Runners-Up

"I'M ON MY PERIOD."

It's technically true that you can't get pregnant while you're on your period, but you can still catch an STI. And here's a little bonus incentive: Wrapping it up can make the action (and clean-up) less of a mess.

"I'M ON BIRTH CONTROL."

Sure, the Pill, IUDs, and emergency contraception can prevent pregnancy, but they do zero for STI defense. "Young women on birth control have a false feeling of protection," warns Withers.

44% are more likely to don a glove with a new hookup.

"It's just smart to use them with new partners," says one respondent. And unless you've seen the receipts from your bedmate's STI test results, you can't be a hundred percent sure that they're squeaky clean. This goes for all new mates, even if you know them well. (One study found that the more familiar you feel with someone—like, say, if they're your childhood friend—the more likely you are to think they're infection-free. Wrong.)



58% say they're super confident in their ability to use a condom correctly.

A refresher: Pinch the tip of the condom and place it on the head of the penis. Leave a little bit of space at the top to collect semen, then carefully unroll the rest down the shaft all the way to the base. Then you're good to go.

88% don't protect themselves during oral sex.

"People commonly think you can't get STIs through oral sex, but nothing could be further from the truth," says **Robert Huizenga, MD, author of *Sex, Lies & STDs***. Thankfully, you've got some tasteful options. Flavored wrappers, like Royal Premium Lubricated Strawberry Flavored Condoms (\$12 for 10, amazon.com), can make a BJ taste pretty sweet. And when your S.O. is going down on you, you can use a dental dam, like Trust Dental Dam (\$30 for 15, amazon.com), which comes in five fun-for-everyone flavors.

16% would wrap it up if it didn't "ruin the moment."

One respondent told us, "When my wife is ready to go, I don't want to waste time getting one on because she loses interest." But think about it: A 30-second break in the action to put on a condom means the rest of your session will be blissfully worry-free.

5% have used a female condom.

Female (or internal) condoms aren't as popular because there's only one, the FC2. But they're free via prescription or your local clinic, or you can buy them at fc2femalecondom.com. The perks: Its nitrile material makes it three times stronger than latex and usable with both water and silicone-based lube. And you can put it in well ahead of sexy time.

<https://www.cosmopolitan.com/sex-love/a25922204/cosmopolitan-condom-power-to-decide-survey/>