

# Barrier methods. Female condom and diaphragm

## What are condoms and what are they for?

They are plastic, pouch-shaped sheaths. Male condoms fit on the penis and female condoms fit inside the vagina. You put one on before having sex to avoid direct contact with sexual fluids.

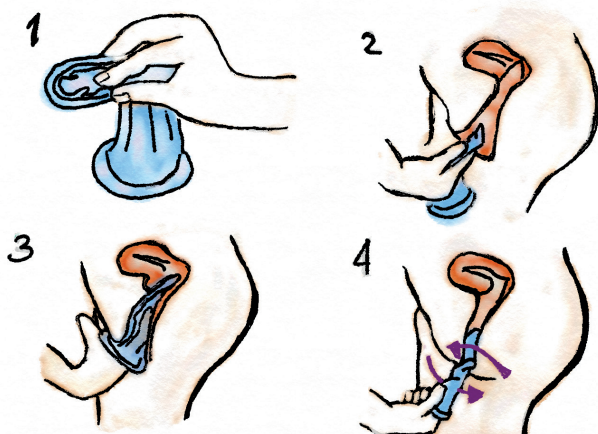
Wearing a condom is **the only method that both prevents pregnancy and protects you from catching sexually transmitted diseases** (including hepatitis, syphilis, gonorrhoea, chlamydia and AIDS, among others). Condoms also protect you from human papillomavirus and consequently reduce the risk of getting cervical cancer. All this makes them the most advisable method of contraception.

## Are they effective?

Condoms are 99% effective. They should be kept in a cool, dry place and should not be subjected to friction. Check the expiration date before using them.

## How do you put in a female condom?

Open the package carefully to avoid tearing the plastic. Squeeze the inner ring and outer ring,



insert the condom into the vagina and push it in as far as it can go, up to your cervix. It should be placed horizontally, so that it covers the neck of the uterus. Then unroll it until the outer ring hangs just outside the vagina. To remove it, pull the outer ring out carefully to keep the semen in the pouch. Check that it is not torn, tie it with a knot and throw it away in the trash. You should use a new condom every time you have sex.

## What is a diaphragm?

A diaphragm is a reusable barrier method. It consists of a plastic membrane fitted on a ring. You insert it into your vagina and push it as far as it can go, so that it covers the neck of the uterus.

You should always use spermicide with it, every time you have sex. Without spermicide the system is not effective.

You can put in your diaphragm 2 hours before having sex. For it to be effective, you should keep it in place for at least 6 to 8 hours after having sex, and always use spermicide. You can leave it in for up to 24h after sex. When you take it out, wash it and put it away in its container. Diaphragms do not protect you from sexually transmitted diseases.