

## What is a Female Condom?

Female condoms are strong, soft, transparent sheaths that are 17 centimeters long (about 6.5 inches—the same as a male condom) with a flexible ring at each end.

Female condoms are inserted into the vagina prior to sexual intercourse and provide protection against both pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDS. The inner ring at the closed end of the condom aids in insertion and secures the device in place during intercourse, while the softer ring remains outside the vagina to help protect the vulva and base of the penis from infection.

### Benefit in Sexual Health

Similar to the male condom, female condoms, when used correctly and consistently, can help protect against sexually transmitted infections and unwanted pregnancy.

### How Do I Use a Female Condom?

- Be sure to check for the expiration date and make sure that the female condom does not have any holes or tears.
- Hold the closed end of the condom and squeeze the inner ring between your thumb and middle finger. Keeping your index finger on the inner ring helps you to insert the condom into the vagina.
- With your other hand, separate the folds of skin (labia) around your vagina.
- Then put the squeezed ring into the vagina and push it up as far as you can.
- Now put your index or middle finger, or both, inside the open end of the condom, until you can feel the inner ring.
- Then push the inner ring as far back into the vagina as it will go. It will then be lying just above your pubic bone. (You can feel your pubic bone by inserting your index or middle finger into your vagina and curving it forward slightly).
- Make sure that the outer ring lies close against the area outside your vagina (vulva).
- It is a good idea to guide the penis into the condom to make sure it does not enter the vagina outside the condom. Holding the outer ring in place, outside the vagina, also helps to stop the entire condom being accidentally pushed right into the vagina. As the female condom is loose-fitting, it will move during sex. But you will still be protected as long as the penis stays inside the condom.
- To remove the condom, simply twist the outer ring to keep the semen inside. Then pull the condom out gently.
- Wrap the condom and put in a bin. Do not put it down the toilet. Make sure the man's penis does not touch the genital area again, and if you have sex again, use a new condom.

**Where Can I Get Female Condoms?**

You can get female condoms along with multiple varieties of male condoms, lubricant, finger cots, dental dams and other sexual health information and resources in the Health Promotion Office (Room 337) at Student Health Services, Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

You may also purchase female condoms in the SHS Pharmacy, located on the first floor.