

This booklet was produced by **Terrence Higgins Trust** for **HIV PREVENTION ENGLAND**, a partnership that includes the following organisations working with gay and bisexual men.



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Cut the cost

You should be able to get free condoms and lube from:

- your local gay men's health project
- sexual health clinics
- some doctors' surgeries.

You can sometimes get free condoms in bars and saunas but don't rely on this: they may all be gone when you need one.

Buying condoms online is often cheaper than from supermarkets and chemists and there's more choice of lube.

At startswithme.org.uk you can find out where to buy cheap condoms and lube. There are more handy tips there about using condoms. If you take the quick condom quiz, you'll be recommended condoms that should suit you better.

StartsWithMe.org.uk

[startswithme](https://www.facebook.com/startswithme) [@startswith_me](https://twitter.com/startswith_me)

Choosing the right condom:
tips for gay and bisexual men.



Sex got better
When I found
the right condom.

FEEL THE
DIFFERENCE

WISE GUYS

Rates of HIV and sexually transmitted infections are high among gay and bisexual men and getting higher*

Condoms are the best protection against them. Using them shows you care for and respect yourself and the men you have sex with.

Are you getting the best experience from condoms? Maybe ones you've used aren't quite right for you or cost more than they need to. Here are tips to help you get a better deal from condoms.

*In the larger cities around one in 10 gay men have HIV.
Across the UK over 40,000 gay and bisexual men now have HIV.



I get my condoms cheaper online.

SO MUCH CHOICE

Condoms come in lots of different sizes, shapes, thicknesses and materials. Shop around. Try them out (eg, when you're on your own) to find one that gives you most pleasure. Things will feel better and the condom will be less likely to come off or break.

Size

Men come in different sizes – so do condoms.

- Do condoms feel too tight or uncomfortable to put on? Do they not cover the penis down to its base? Do you find that they break? These are signs a condom is too small. Look out for 'extra large' or 'XL' condoms: they are longer (and some are wider).
- Do you find that condoms come off during sex? Then they could be too big. Look for smaller condoms sold as 'trim', 'snug' or 'slim fit'.

Thinness

Studies show you can safely use any condom for anal sex, including standard thickness or thinner brands. If you feel happier using a thicker one look for 'ultra strong' or 'extra safe' but thinner condoms are totally fine and could give you more feeling.

Materials

Most condoms are made from latex rubber, which some of us are allergic to. Do condoms make your or your partner's skin irritated or itchy? Then look for non-latex condoms made from 'polyisoprene' (such as Mates Skyn condoms and Durex Latex Free). Even if you aren't allergic you might prefer polyisoprene condoms as they can feel thinner.

Stay slippy

Using lubricant with a condom means it's less likely to rip or come off (and anal sex will be more comfortable). Whatever your condoms are made from, use water-based lube. **Never use oil-based lubes**, which can quickly weaken condoms, making them break.

✓ DO USE	✗ DON'T USE	
water-based lubes: such as KY, Liquid Silk, Wet Stuff	oil-based lubes: such as hand cream, hair gel, suntan lotion, Vaseline, soap,	kitchen oils, lubes with 'cream' or 'grease' in their name eg Elbow Grease or ID Cream.

Silicone-based lube is also safe to use with any condom.

Don't use spit as lube as it dries quickly, making condoms more likely to break during sex. You'll also never have enough!