



## **FEMALE CONDOM**

The female condom is one of several barrier-type contraceptive methods available for use by women. The female condom is a vaginal liner that must be placed inside the vagina prior to intercourse. It also is constructed so that flaps cover the vulvar area.

Like the male condom, the female condom must be used with each episode of intercourse. There are at least three types of female condoms. One type is similar to a G-string panty with an attached condom that is placed over the penis. Another type is similar to a male condom, with a 2-inch flexible ring that hangs from the vaginal opening and a thickened, domed upper end that is inserted into the vagina with a tampon-like applicator. The third type is a polyurethane sheath with an open ringed end to the outside and a closed internal ring placed over the cervix in a similar fashion to a diaphragm.

The female condom has a slippage/breakage rate of about 3%. The manufacturers suggest that they remain in place for 6 to 8 hours after intercourse. Whether this is really necessary or not is not known.

Also, like the male condom, the female condom reduces the risk of transmission of sexually transmitted diseases such as gonorrhea, HIV, genital warts, hepatitis, and herpes.

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