

## How to Buy Condoms

Three Parts:[Finding the Right Fit and Feel](#)[Navigating Condom Features](#)[Making a Purchase](#)[Community Q&A](#)

You're in the fluorescent-lit condom aisle in the drugstore, your heart beating wildly as you try to choose from among dozens of options before someone notices you've been standing there for more than 10 minutes. Condoms come in so many different sizes, textures, colors and flavors that it can be tough to know where to begin. You've come to the right place! Keep reading to learn how to buy condoms that match your size and style - and the next time you hit the drugstore, you'll be able to make a confident choice.

### Steps

#### Part 1

#### Finding the Right Fit and Feel

1.



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**Decide what condom material works for you.** Condoms are made with several different types of material.

**A** You will feel a little different in the condom. It's a good idea to shop around and try a few different kinds to figure out what one feels the best for you. When used correctly, they are 98% effective in preventing pregnancy and 95% effective in preventing STD contraction.

- Latex rubber is the most common material used to make condoms. These condoms are cheap and effective (when used correctly), but if you or your partner is allergic to latex, you'll need another option.<sup>[2]</sup>
- Lambskin condoms are a natural alternative for those who are allergic to latex and wish to avoid rubber. However, **lambskin condoms do not prevent you from contracting STDs**. Choose this option only if you're in a committed relationship and you've both been tested.
- Polyurethane condoms are stronger and thicker than latex condoms, and they're fine to use for people who are allergic to latex. The material heats up to the same temperature as your natural body temperature, so when you use these condoms it feels like you're not wearing anything. The drawback is that polyurethane condoms are more expensive than latex.
- Tactylon condoms are stretchier than other condoms, conforming to the shape of the penis. They are said to have a more natural fit than other condoms. They can also be a little difficult to find and are more expensive than latex condoms.



**Find the right fit.** Most condoms fit the average penis, which is four to seven inches long. Try on a regular-sized condom and determine how it fits. If it rolls on easily and stays firmly in place, you're probably fine wearing regular-sized condoms. If it feels loose and seems to slip, go for a smaller size. If it's tight to the point of being painful or looking like it's going to tear, try on a bigger size. Trying on different sizes is really the best way to find out what fits you best. You can look up condom sizes online on specialty websites.

- The shape of a condom also factors into how it fits. Different brands come in slightly different shapes, so again, it's a good idea to experiment and find out what kind works best with the shape of your penis. In a pinch, any shape will likely fit; it's just a matter of which one ends up feeling the best and most natural.
- If you're buying condoms for someone else, getting an average size is usually a safe bet. If you know your partner is extraordinarily large or small, you can get a few backups just in case.
- The condom size (e.g. how well it fits) plays a huge role in the condom's effectiveness. If a condom is too large, it could come off during intercourse while condoms that are too small could break. If a condom is not long enough to cover the entire penis, bodily fluids could be transferred to your partner. All these scenarios would decrease your level of protection.

### **Measure:**

1. In order to accurately measure penis size, first you must have an erect penis (since penis size when flaccid is not an accurate measurement).
2. Measure Penis Length with a ruler or measuring tape. Position the ruler or measuring tape at the base of your penis (where it attaches to your body - make sure to press into the pubic bone as far as you can because fat can actually hide the length of your penis).
3. Measure Penis Girth with a piece of string (or something similar) or a soft measuring tape. Gently wrap the string one time around the thickest part of the shaft/body of your erect penis (yes, it still needs to be erect!).

### **Fit:**

USA:

Small Condoms

Fits Length: 3 Inches - 6.5 Inches

Fits Girth: 4.1 Inches - 4.7 Inches

Examples: Any condom represented as small or snug.

Regular Condoms

Fits Length: 4 Inches - 7 Inches

Fits Girth: 4.4 Inches - 5 Inches

Examples: Any condom that does not specify a size.

Large Condoms

Fits Length: 4 Inches - 8 Inches

Fits Girth: 4.7 Inches - 5.3 Inches

Examples: Any condom represented as large or magnum.

#### X-Large Condoms

Fits Length: 4 Inches - 9 Inches

Fits Girth: 4.9 Inches - 5.6 Inches

Examples: Any condom represented as extra-large or XL.

(Due to FDA regulations condoms sold in the USA must be between 47mm and 57mm in flat width at the entrance. Therefore condoms that are correctly sized for individuals with a girth under 4.1 inches or over 5.6 inches are not available in the USA.)

#### Europe:

Condom packages in Europe are required to be clearly labeled with the condom length and width. Start by selecting the correct width, then ensure the length is sufficient as well. To get the correct condom width multiply your circumference by 0.42 and look for a condom that is +/- 2mm in width from the result.



### 3.3

**Consider female condoms.** Female condoms aren't as commonly used as male condoms, but they can be a great option for couples. Female condoms are inserted inside the vagina and cover part of the labia as well,

effectively protecting against pregnancy as well as STDs.

- Female condoms can be inserted up to 8 hours before intercourse. This makes them a great option for people who dislike interrupting foreplay to put a condom on.
- Female condoms are made from polyurethane, and like male condoms made from this material, many find them to feel natural and less rubbery than latex.

## Part 2

### Navigating Condom Features

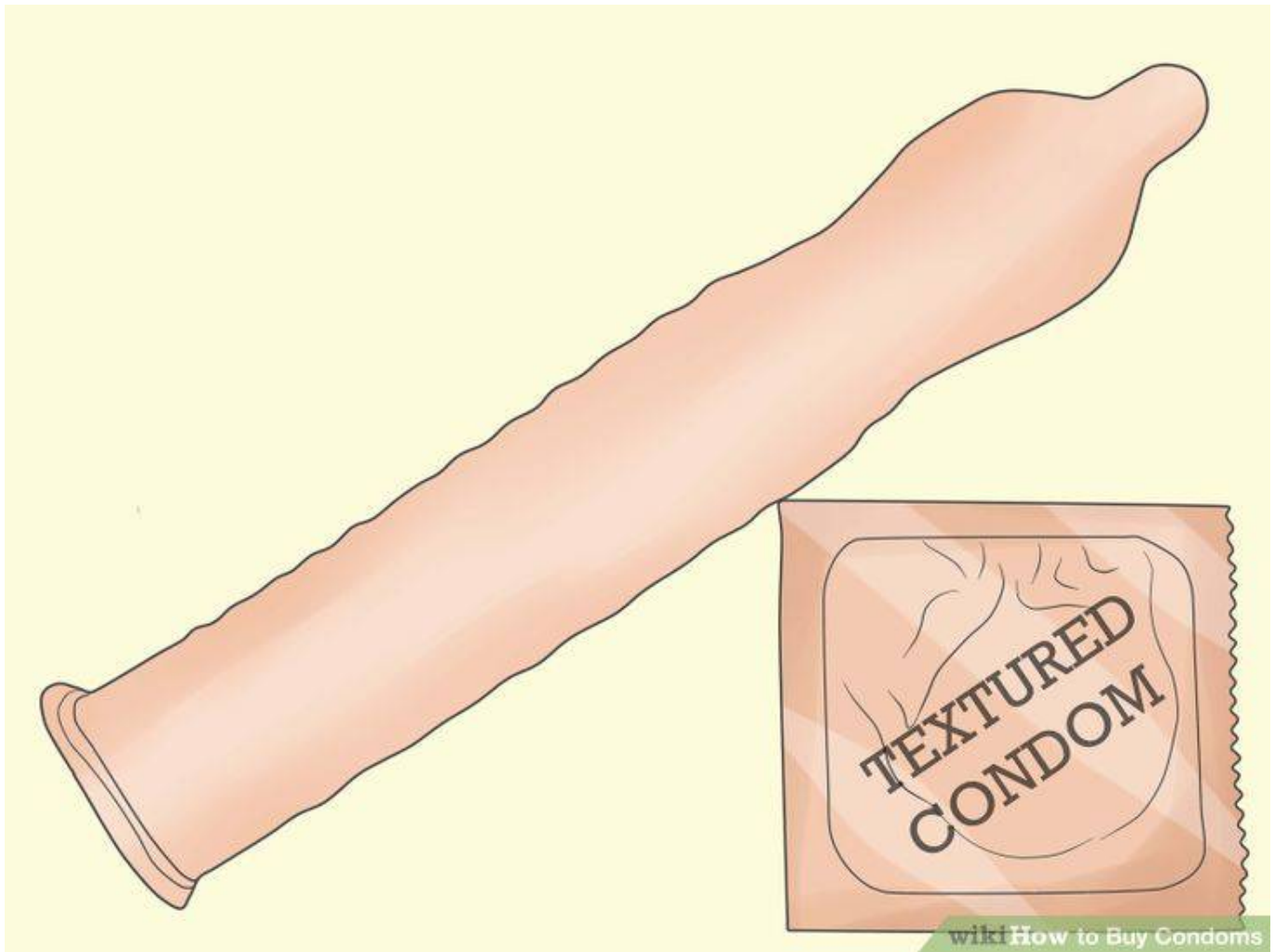


#### 1.1

**Decide whether you like them lubricated.** Some condoms come with lubricant, or "lube," already applied to the condom. Lube helps the condom slip onto the penis and everywhere else with minimum friction, making the experience more comfortable for all involved and preventing the condom from tearing. It's convenient to buy condoms that are lubricated, but some people prefer buying lube separately. If you're going to do that, it's important to know what types of lube work with different condom materials.

- Water and silicone-based lubricants work with all types of condoms.
- Oil-based lubricants should only be used with polyurethane and tactylon condoms. Do not use baby oil, mineral oil, petroleum jelly, or any other oil-based lubricant with latex or lambskin condoms.
- If you want added protection, you can get condoms that come with spermicidal lubricant. The

spermicide kills a large portion of the sperm once ejaculation occurs. If you're worried about condom breakage, you might want this extra bit of security. Be aware that spermicides can sometimes cause side effects such as irritation, burning and urinary infections.



## 2.2

**Decide what texture feels the best.** Some people like their condoms to feel like they aren't even there, while others enjoy the sensation of condoms that are ribbed or have bumps. Each texture has the same efficacy, so feel free to make the decision entirely based on your own idea of pleasure.

- If you're buying condoms for a first-time experience with your partner, getting condoms without ribbing or bumps is a safe bet. As you get to know each other's preferences, you can try out different textures.

## 3.

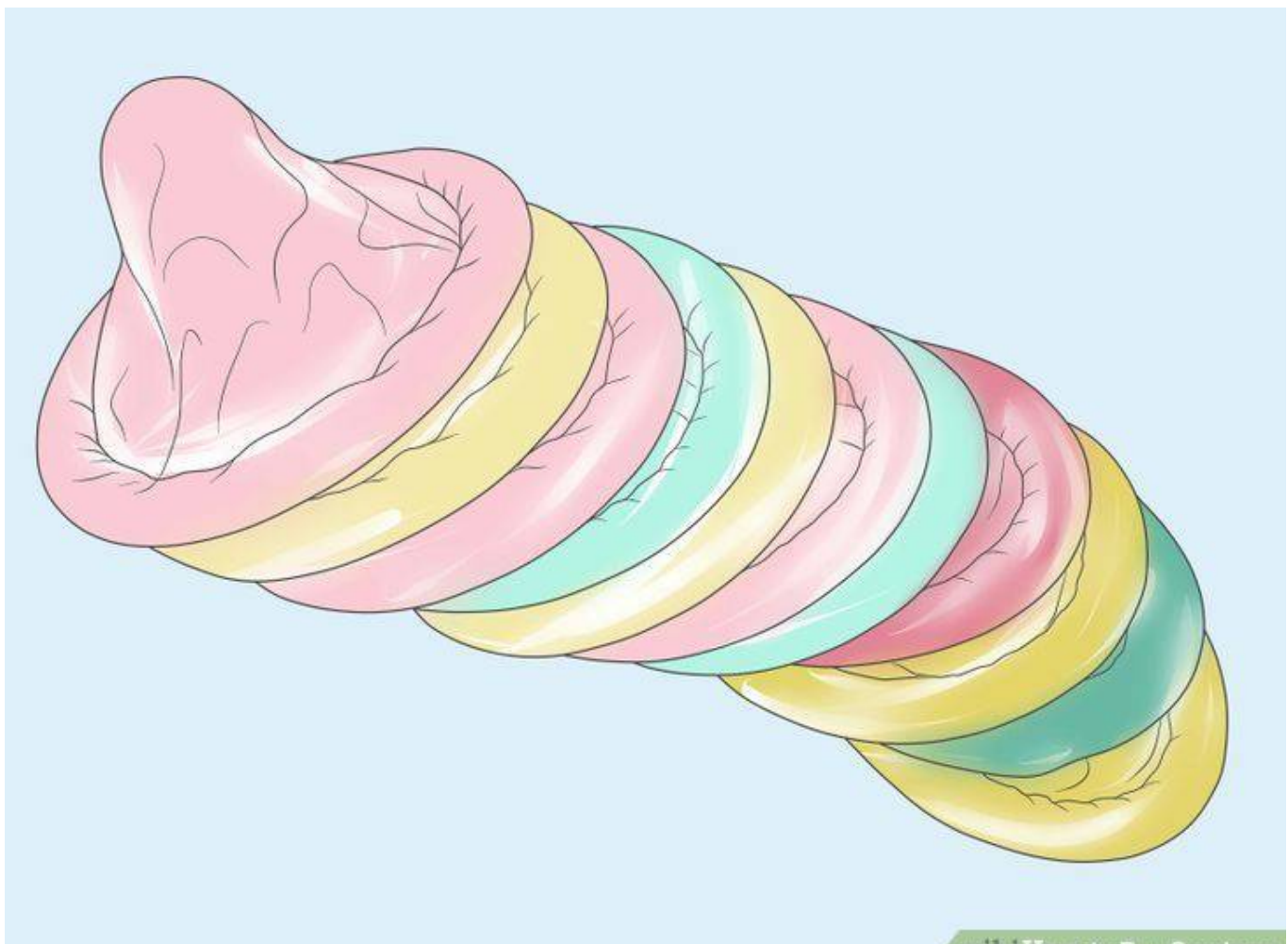




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**Decide what level of sensitivity works for you.** You'll see some condoms labeled as "extra sensitive" or "ultra sensitive," and these are designed to be as thin and difficult to detect as possible, so you can feel the maximum amount of sensation. Some people prefer to be able to feel the condom during sex, so they know it's still securely in place. Either way is equally effective at preventing pregnancy and STDs.

4.

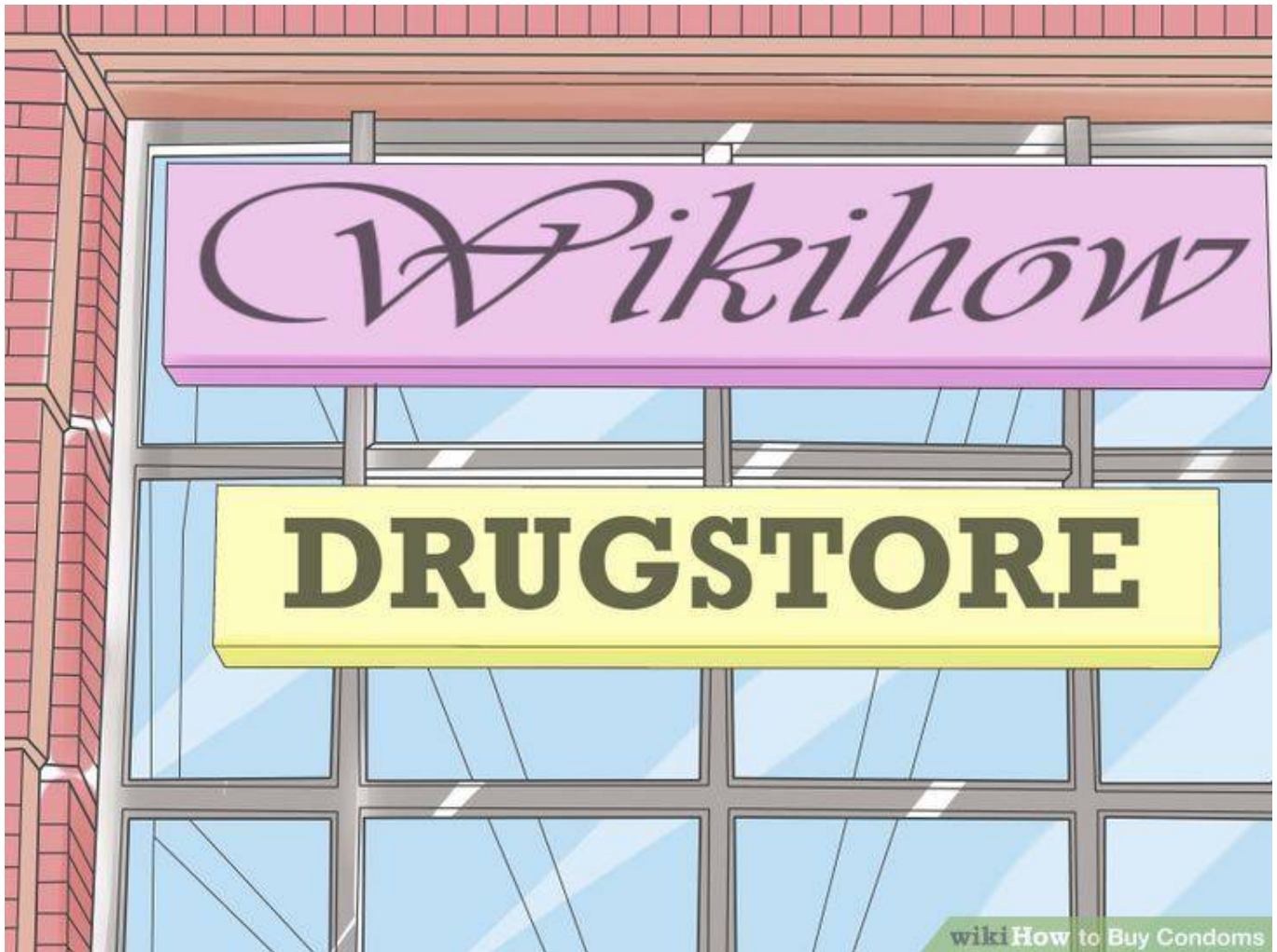


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**Decide what colors and smells suit you best.** Standard condoms are usually translucent, so when you put them on they show your natural skin color. If you're looking for something a little more fun, you can buy condoms in every color you can imagine - turquoise, orange, hot pink, blue, tuxedo (black), and everything in between. Condoms also come in different scents, like cinnamon, mint and cherry.

### Part 3

## Making a Purchase



1. 1

**Find them at a drugstore.** Any drugstore will be well-stocked with a variety of condoms. Now that you know more about how to choose a type, size and style that you like, you can browse the condom aisle as an informed shopper.

2.





2

**Buy them online.** This is especially useful if you feel awkward to buy condoms in pharmacy or supermarket. Usually you will get professional advice if you send an email, and your package will arrive in a discreet box to prevent embarrassment.

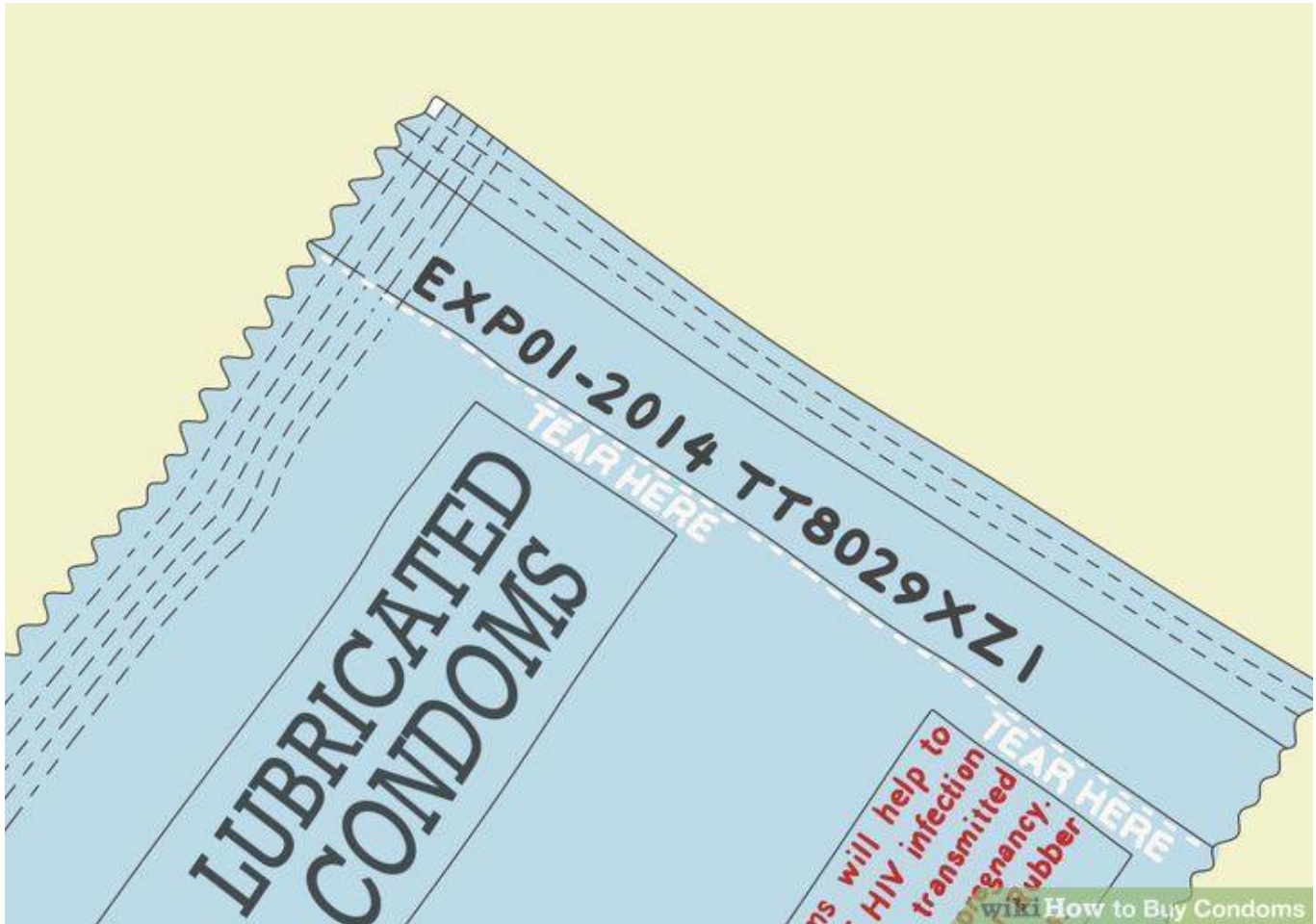
3.





3

**Buy them in bulk.** Buying a small box of condoms is a lot more expensive than buying them in bulk. Once you figure out what you like, look online for a good deal on a large box of 30 or more condoms.



4.4

**Always check the expiration date.** Condoms don't last forever, so make sure the ones you pick up haven't expired.

## Tips

- Make sure you have at least 2 condoms in your possession. Sometimes one can break or not be enough for a nightlong play.

## Warnings

- Double check on the expiration date before buying a condom.
- If you are using non-lubricated condom and are planning to apply a lubricant, make sure that the lubricant is compatible with the material of your condom. Do not use oil-based lubricants on a condom.

## Related wikiHow's

[How to Know if You Are Ready to Have Sex](#)

[How to Prevent HIV Infection](#)

[How to Avoid a Teenage Pregnancy](#)

[How to Get Free Condoms](#)

[How to Have Safer Sex](#)

[How to Protect Against an STD](#)

[How to Buy Condoms Discreetly](#)

[How to Use a Condom](#)

## Sources and Citations

1. ↑ <http://goaskalice.columbia.edu/are-polyurethane-condoms-effective-latex-ones>
2. ↑ [http://www.askmen.com/dating/love\\_tip\\_150/150\\_love\\_tip.html](http://www.askmen.com/dating/love_tip_150/150_love_tip.html)