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## Topic: Sex

### Speak Up for Safer Sex

Jane Neff Rollins, MSPH

"Wearing a condom during sex is like wearing a raincoat while you shower." Has your partner reacted this way to your request that he put on a rubber before you get down and dirty? Even if it feels like a drag, it's important to insist on safer sex. What follows are some strategies that can you negotiate effectively for safer sex-while keeping sex fun.

#### Is Safer Sex Really Necessary?

"There are still some people who think only gay men or IV drug users get HIV" says Chuck Hand, coordinator of the Safe, Hot and Damned Erotic Sex (SHADES) program of the AIDS Service Center in Pasadena, California, "There is a lot of misinformation out there."

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Bethesda, MD, in 1999, nearly one of every six people reported with HIV in the U.S. were between the ages of 13 and 24. And 49 percent of those teens and young adults with HIV were female.

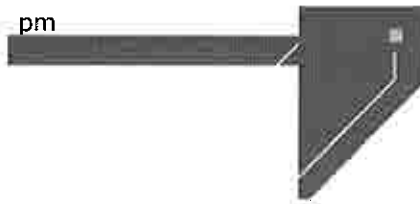
If that's not scary enough, the CDC estimates that five to ten percent of all American teenagers are infected with chlamydia, a sexually transmitted disease that can go undetected for years in men and women. Herpes, gonorrhea, and syphilis are other possible risks. And, of course, most teens and young adults don't plan on bringing a child into the world. For all of these reasons, using a condom consistently and correctly every time you have sex is vital.

#### Practice Makes Perfect

So what can you use as a snappy comeback to the partner who uses the "raincoat in the shower" objection to sporting a

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penile mods  
\*GUYS\* going down THERE  
Girly masturbation  
hair somewhere  
blow job  
shaving the pussy  
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Chat with Scott in the Sex Room!  
12/18/2001 at 7:00 pm  
Sex chat with Scott  
12/13/2001 at 8:00



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## Star Struck

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rubber?

"Most kids know they should wear condoms, but they don't. They're not comfortable having that exchange," says Judd Winick, author of *Pedro and Me: Friendship, Loss and What I Learned* (Henry Holt, 2000), and former cast member on MTV's *The Real World*.

What's the solution? Winick suggests a practice run of the exchange. That way, first time the words "Here, put this on" come out your mouth, you won't be naked and/or excited.

Try role-playing with a friend before your next big date. Have your friend pretend to be a balky lover, then try out the scenarios below. Then switch roles, so that your friend can get some practice, too.

If he says, "It's uncomfortable" or "It doesn't fit," try saying:

- "Let's try this other brand. It may fit better."
- "Let's try this flavored brand. I'll help make it feel better."

If he says, "It ruins the mood," try saying:

- "Being safe enhances my mood."
- "The safer I feel, the sexier I feel."

If he says, "Are you worried you could catch something?" try saying:

- "Aren't you?"
- "Yeah, but using protection takes care of those worries."

If he says, "I'm clean. I just tested negative for HIV last month," try saying:

- "Last month was last month. If you haven't worn a condom since then, we could both still be at risk."
- "It's nothing personal. I make it a rule every time: no glove, no love."

If he says, "Don't you trust me?" try saying:

- "If you don't want to protect me by using a condom, why are you asking me to trust you?"
- "My life is more important than whether you have doubts about how I feel about you."

If he says, "I don't know how to put this thing on," try saying:

- "Here, let me help you."
- "Let's go check out drDrew.com."

Once you've had some practice, it should be easier to convince your partner to use a condom consistently and correctly every time. Then pull down the shades, and enjoy safe, hot, and erotic sex of your own.