



The CONDOM

The condom is a shining beacon of human ingenuity. They're cheap to produce, cheap to buy and they are available just about everywhere. The use of a condom-like prophylactic can be traced all the way back to ancient Egypt. During the Renaissance, condoms were made from the intestines of an animal. This continued through to the 19th century when Charles Goodyear (yeah, the tire guy) and Thomas Hancock discovered rubber vulcanization. It was a breakthrough. This elastic rubber allowed for the first large-scale manufacturing and marketing of johnnies to the masses.

The modern latex condom was developed in 1919 and then industry just ran with the concept. Today we have ribbed, studded, warming, pleasure-shaped, flavoured (would you believe cola?) and even edible condoms. That's right, edible condoms. They don't protect you, but they do satisfy your gastronomic "pleasure." The innovation continued with polyurethane condoms, which conduct heat better and offer an alternative for those with latex allergies.

Currently in development is the "invisible condom" for women – a liquid that hardens at body temperature, creating a protective film inside the vagina, and a similar spray-on condom designed for men. Good luck with those. ◉

USEFUL OUTSIDE OF THE BEDROOM

Navy Seals use two condoms and neoprene cement to waterproof firing assemblies for underwater demolitions. This is called a Dual Waterproof Firing Assembly. The BBC and many other broadcasting organizations use condoms to waterproof microphones. Looming natural disaster heading your way? Fill some condoms with drinking water – they'll hold at least a gallon. However, do handle with care.