

**THEMATIC UNIT:  
CONTRACEPTION and CONDOMS**



**Overview**

This unit is provided to support young people aged 14+/16+ who are learning in Curriculum for Excellence terms at Early, First or Second Level. This is a broad spectrum of cognitive ability but this content acknowledges that other parts of the national RSHP resource might not meet the needs of young people who require *age appropriate* but also *cognitively appropriate* learning on this key topic.

**This unit aims to enhance the learners’ understanding of Contraception and Condoms.**

Prior to facilitating learning on this theme young people will need an understanding of what sex is and also of conception, which is covered in the unit called **Sex/Sexual Intercourse**. Learning should also stand alongside ongoing opportunities to learn about relationships and the core idea of consent.

Understanding is developed and embedded through a range of carefully planned and personalised learning experiences. The activities are suggestions only. You can adapt or extend them to suit your learners’ age, cognitive ability and specific needs.

Links to Curriculum for Excellence	Learning intentions	Success criteria
<p>I am developing skills for making decisions about my relationships and sexual behaviour. I am able to apply these to situations that may be challenging or difficult. <b>HWB 3-46c</b></p> <p>Using what I have learned I am able to make informed decisions and choices that promote and protect my own and others’ sexual health and wellbeing. <b>HWB 3-47b</b></p> <p>I know how to access services, information and support if my sexual health and wellbeing is at risk. I am aware of my rights in relation to sexual health including my right to confidentiality, and my responsibilities, including those under the law. <b>HWB 3-48a</b></p>	<p>With the appropriate level of support and resources children and young people learn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That contraception is used to prevent pregnancy.</li> <li>• That there are different kinds of contraception.</li> <li>• That condoms prevent pregnancy and can protect from STIs.</li> <li>• That condoms can be used with lubricant.</li> <li>• Who they can go to with questions or to access contraception or condoms.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can explain what contraception is used for.</li> <li>• I can explain what a condom is used for.</li> <li>• I understand how to use a condom.</li> <li>• I can identify a person I can speak to if I want to talk about or access contraception or condoms.</li> </ul>

## **Why this learning matters**

As parents, carers or educators we may not imagine that young people with additional support needs/learning disabilities will enter into sexual relationships that mean they need to consider choices or use of contraception or condoms, but as young adults they might. If they do, they will benefit from awareness and understanding of the key messages that this unit of learning delivers.

Some of the concepts here are challenging, but we can work together as the adults around the young person to provide the best possible supports or scaffolding so that if they, one day, are in a position to develop an intimate adult relationship, there is a foundation we can build on so that they avoid unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections.

The learning supported by the materials in this unit is intended for both young women and young men. If and when young people are ready and have the capacity to consent to sexual intercourse, we want them to be involved with their partner in decisions made about contraception and condoms.

**About consent:** It is not possible here to explore whether an individual young person with additional support needs/learning disabilities will have capacity to consent to sexual relationships from the age of 16. This can only be done on an individual basis, where the young person, their parents and carers and supporting professionals can work together to assess needs, risks and to consider all of these in the context of the young person/young adult's human rights.

## **Activities, ideas and supports for learning**

There are 3 sections in this booklet.

- 1. Learning about and accessing services**
- 2. Contraception**
- 3. Condoms**

### **1. Learning about services/creating a project on *my health and wellbeing***

An important aspect of learning about contraception and condoms for young people is having an awareness of where they might go to talk about them, ask questions or be provided with what they need. Equally important is to encourage young people to consider their sexual and reproductive health as just a part of their health and wellbeing – and so something they can be informed about, be proactive about and know where good advice is available.

To learn about support and services available to them, young people could undertake a project where they identify and locate all the people they can talk to about their health and wellbeing. Perhaps they could be supported to create a poster or a PowerPoint or a scrapbook with a title along the lines of **My Health and Wellbeing**. They could be encouraged to think about questions like:

- *What do I do to stay healthy?*
- *Who helps me stay healthy?*
- *Who do I speak to if I am feeling unwell?*
- *Who do I speak to if I am worried or upset?*

As they work on their project many young people will benefit from real world experiences such as visiting the local pharmacy, their GP practice and in time their local sexual health clinic. With permissions, they could take photographs and draw or write to build an aide-memoire of people and services. They might also benefit from undertaking their project (with the knowledge and support of parents and carers) with an educator or support worker who can help build a sense of confidence and autonomy in their interaction with health services.

The project could be started before any exploration of contraception and condoms, and when required lead to additional questions and collated responses:

- *Who do I speak to about contraception?*
- *Where can I get contraception?*
- *Who do I speak to about condoms?*
- *Where can I get condoms?*

## **2. Contraception**

The PowerPoint available provides a script that can be used to build understanding and knowledge about the purpose of contraception. Content re-visits some information already provided in the learning materials on the theme of sex/sexual intercourse. Content also explores the different contraception options available, including Emergency Contraception.

There is a lot of information here, presented in 3 parts, and it is likely this will be covered over time, as needed, revisiting and building understanding as you go. The text is a starting point, you might want to edit or extend as necessary for the young person or group you are working with. Images of people or places can also be personalised.

Of course no method of contraception is 100% effective, but the messages here are intended to be straightforward. Knowing the learner means you can introduce more nuanced messages as and when basic concepts are understood.

### **Part 1: What is contraception? Why do people use contraception?**

- When a man has an orgasm a white liquid will come out of his hard penis. The white liquid is full of sperm.
- If the sperm comes out of the man's penis when it is inside the woman's vagina then it goes inside the woman.
- Inside the woman are little eggs that live in a part of her body.
- When the sperm meets an egg they join together. This is how a baby is made.
- If the woman and man are having sex but don't want to have a baby, then they can use contraception.
- Contraception is a medicine that stops the woman's egg and the man's sperm from joining together. This means the woman will not get pregnant.
- The woman can talk with her doctor or nurse and her partner about what kind of contraception will work best for them.

### **Part 2: There are lots of different kinds of contraception a woman can use.**

- A doctor or nurse will give the woman contraception. There are different kinds.
- The woman can take a pill.

- The woman can have a little implant put just under the skin on her arm.
- The woman can get an injection.
- All these things are a medicine that can stop the woman from becoming pregnant.
- You can get contraception from your GP or you can go to a sexual health clinic.
- You can talk to an adult you trust who can help you talk to a doctor or nurse about contraception.

### **Part 3: Emergency contraception**

- If you have sex and you did not use contraception or a condom you can get pregnant.
- If you have sex and you did not use contraception or a condom you must speak to an adult you trust.
- The adult will help you to get emergency contraception.
- Emergency contraception is a special pill that will stop the woman getting pregnant.
- For emergency contraception to stop the woman getting pregnant she must take it within 5 days of having sex.
- You can get emergency contraception for free from your local pharmacy or your GP or at a sexual health clinic.

### **3. Condoms**

The PowerPoints available provides a script that can be used to build understanding and knowledge about the purpose of condoms as a contraceptive and to protect against STIs, and how to use them. There is a lot of information here, presented in 6 parts, and as with the earlier content about contraception it is likely this will be covered over time, as needed, revisiting and building understanding as you go.

There is a link to short films showing how condoms are used but the most useful approach will be to support young people to have condoms to hand, to open them and in terms of the male condom to use a demonstrator to practice their use. Condom demonstrators will be available to borrow from your local sexual health service, along with free condoms. If you do not feel confident to facilitate such a session yourself, you might find support in your local sexual health service or a local youth work or community organisation.

Please also consider providing young men with condoms to take home. If young men can be given condoms to put on in their own private space/in their bedroom at home, they can practice using them, including masturbating with a condom on. With familiarity and practice they will be more likely to discover what fit they need and more proficient at using them when they need to do so. You will need to check in with any young man on how they get on, helping them access the right condom for them.

Of course, young women can also be given both male and female condoms. Young women can decide if female condoms are something they would use and can also familiarise themselves with the male condom in order to understand how they look and feel.

If you are facilitating education about condoms for young people, both young men and young women, and want to make them available to them to take away, you will need to ascertain your settings policy about providing condoms. If you cannot do so, then part of engaging young people with local condom provision will be to make sure they can access what they need, and that the other service understands the young person's needs. Please

also note that there is no age restriction on condoms, you do not need to be 16 to obtain them free of charge or if buying them.

The text in the PowerPoint scripts provided is a starting point, you might want to edit or extend as necessary for the young person or group you are working with. Of course condoms are not 100% effective, but the messages here are intended to be straightforward. Knowing the learner means you can introduce more nuanced messages as and when basic concepts are understood.

**Part 1: There is only one type of contraception a man can use. It is called a condom.**

- A man fits the condom over his penis when it is hard (erect).
- During sex, his sperm comes out. The sperm collects in the condom instead of going into the woman's vagina. So, the sperm cannot meet the egg.
- You can only use a condom one time.
- When it has been used, put it in some tissue and in the bin. Never flush it down the toilet.
- It is a good idea to practice how to put a condom on properly before using them when having sex with someone.
- Male condom: Condom demonstration (duration 1 minute 43)  
<https://vimeo.com/684152273>

**Part 2: Are all condoms for men the same?**

- Condoms come in different sizes. They can be different length or different width.
- Condoms come in different colours, some have flavours or different thickness or shape to give a different feel.
- A condom should fit properly. If it fits it will feel better.
- It helps to practice with different types and sizes of condom on your own to make sure you use one that's comfortable and fits well. You can do this in your bedroom, in private.

**Part 3: There is also a condom for women**

- A female (woman's) condom fits inside her vagina.
- During sex, the man's sperm comes out of his penis (when he ejaculates). The sperm collects in the condom. So, the sperm cannot meet the egg.
- You can only use a condom one time.
- When it has been used put it in some tissue and in the bin. Never flush it down the toilet.
- Female condoms: How do they work? (duration 1 minute 5)  
<https://youtu.be/EfwstN51Zlw>  
*(Facilitators please note that the service information at the end of this short film is not the local information your young people will need)*

**Part 4: Condoms offer protection from infections too**

- A person can have an infection called a sexually transmitted infection.
- If a person has a sexually transmitted infection (STI) it can be passed on to another person when they have sex.

- If a man or woman uses a condom when they have sex this protects them from the STI.
- Anal sex is when a man puts his penis in another person's bottom. If people have anal sex, they should always use a condom. This protects both of them from sexually transmitted infections.
- If you were worried about sexually transmitted infections who would you speak to? *(Facilitator: This would be a time to help young people to identify an adult they trust, and also to clarify which local services they can access, remembering or building on earlier work)*

#### **Part 5: What is lubricant/lube?**

- Lube is a liquid or gel that people put on their penis or vulva and in their vagina or bottom when they have sex. It makes the vulva, vagina, penis or bottom wetter or slippery.
- Lube can be used to makes sex more comfortable and feel better.
- If you have anal sex – penis in anus/bottom sex – then both condoms and lube should be used together.
- Lube should always be water based or silicone based. Never use anything that is an oil or oil-based lubricant (like massage oil or baby oil) with male condoms as this can make the condom break.

#### **Part 6: Where can I get condoms?**

- You can get condoms for free from... – *Facilitator should insert information about local condom provision schemes/nearest place here*
- You can get condoms for free from your local pharmacy, your GP and a sexual health clinic.
- You can buy condoms at the supermarket.

#### **Other supporting materials**

The agency CHANGE have now put their easy-read books on to YouTube as animated videos. The animation on **Safer Sex and Contraception** (11 minutes 16 seconds) can be accessed via our ASN Images password protected space on the RSHP resource. This film talks about 'safer sex' when discussing condom use. It describes contraception choices:

<https://rshp.scot/learners-with-additional-support-needs-asn/images/>

#### **Extending learning**

In the identification of which CfE Experiences and Outcomes are of relevance to our learners we have drawn, in this unit, on those at Third Level. This is not because we expect our learners to be learning at Third Level for say Literacy or Numeracy, but because they remind us that much of what we do needs to be age as well as developmentally appropriate. If your learners would benefit from extending learning beyond what is described in this booklet please do refer to other RSHP material at First, Second and Third Level for some useful material you might want to adapt.

<https://rshp.scot/first-level/#howhumanlifebegins>

<https://rshp.scot/second-level/#humanlife>

<https://rshp.scot/second-level/#howadultsplan>

<https://rshp.scot/third-fourth-level/#gettingpregnant>

<https://rshp.scot/third-fourth-level/#choices>  
<https://rshp.scot/third-fourth-level/#condoms>  
<https://rshp.scot/third-fourth-level/#sexualhealth>

**And finally....**

**I can indicate to an adult if I am upset**

Young people may be upset about aspects of their RSHP learning. As they learn we want them to understand and remember who they can find support from. Please use other opportunities to support young people to identify adults they trust and can talk to. In the material that supports learning for learners with more complex needs we talk about the My Circle exercise (see unit [Personal Space and Boundaries - RSHP](#)) which can support young people to identify who they can speak to if they are upset. Of course, it is also the responsibility of adults who provide education and care to know the learner well and to be aware of changes in behaviours that might communicate worry or distress.

**Learner evaluation**

Learners should be asked to show a preference as to whether they like or dislike the activities that are part of their RSHP learning. It may be possible to tell if the child/young person is enjoying their participation as it happens, this is facilitated when the adult knows the learner well and is able to interpret reactions. Whether at school or at home, you may have already worked on developing an object of reference or signifier for when you want to know a child/young person's opinion. Learner evaluation will help you to make learning more enjoyable, relevant and useful.