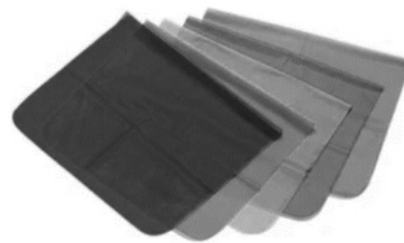


## Dental Dams

### What is a dental dam?

A dental dam is a thin piece of latex that is used to cover the anus or vulva for oral sex. It decreases the risk of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) by stopping body fluids from passing between partners. Dental dams are not meant to be used to prevent pregnancy.



### How do I use a dental dam?

- You can buy a dental dam at some pharmacies and specialty shops.
- Use a new dental dam for **each act** of oral sex to lower the chance of STIs being passed between partners.
- To increase feeling and help the dental dam stay in place, use lubricant on the side that touches the vulva or anus. Use water-based or silicone lubricant, as oil-based lubricants can break down latex dental dams or condoms.
- Lay the dental dam flat over the entire vulva or anus.
- Hold the dental dam in place. Don't stretch it or let it flip over. Consider marking one side so you know which side your mouth goes on.
- Throw it away in the garbage after use and don't flush it down the toilet.

### How can I make a dental dam?

If you don't have a dental dam, you can make a dental dam out of a condom. To make a dam you need a new condom and a pair of scissors.

1. Check the condom expiry date and check that the package doesn't have any holes. Get a new one if it's expired or the package is damaged.
2. Carefully open the condom package.
3. While the condom is still rolled up, cut the tip off (Figure 1).
4. Keep the condom rolled and put the scissors through the middle and cut through one side of the ring (Figure 2).
5. Unroll the condom. You now have a rectangular piece of material to spread out over a vulva or anus to act as a barrier (Figure 3).

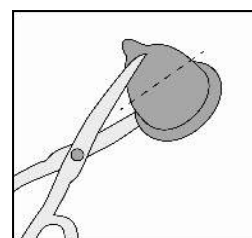


Figure 1

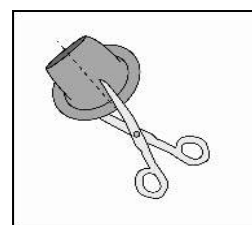


Figure 2

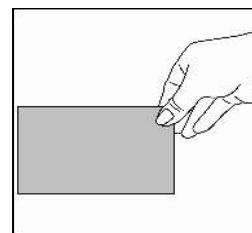


Figure 3

## Did you know?

- You have the right to decide to have sex or not. Talk with your partner(s) about consent.
- There is an 85% chance of becoming pregnant within one year, if no birth control is used for vaginal sex.
- Use a condom every time you have sex (oral, vaginal, anal). Condoms help prevent pregnancy, STIs and HIV.
- You can lower your risk of HIV by taking an HIV prevention pill every day. Many Albertans can get it for free. Visit [www.prepalberta.ca](http://www.prepalberta.ca) to find out more.
- Transgender and gender diverse people who have a uterus can use hormonal birth control. It can help prevent pregnancy and make periods lighter and less painful.

## Websites

- [ahs.ca/srh](http://ahs.ca/srh)
- [ReadyorNotAlberta.ca](http://ReadyorNotAlberta.ca)
- [TeachingSexualHealth.ca](http://TeachingSexualHealth.ca)
- [myhealth.alberta.ca](http://myhealth.alberta.ca)
- [sexandu.ca](http://sexandu.ca)

For 24/7 nurse advice and general health information, call Health Link at **811**.



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