

Argentina to hand out 82 mln free condoms

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Argentina plans to give out 82 million condoms nationwide in 2013 in a campaign against sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV, the health ministry said Friday.

The condoms will be handed out at [health centers](#), schools, prisons, bars and nightclubs, as well as through a network of nearly 3,000 fixed spots at public agencies.

The free distribution of condoms—and of 17 million lubricating gels—aims to "ensure access to preventative methods against sexually transmitted diseases," the ministry said in a statement.

Lubrication helps prevent condoms from tearing and helps avoid abrasions, which could lead to [contaminated blood](#) infecting the partner.

In Argentina, about 5,500 people are newly diagnosed with HIV each year, and "90 percent of new infections come from sex without using condoms," it added.

However, the agency noted that the number of new HIV infections has dropped by more than 30 percent since 2004, and the infection rate in 2010 stood at 11.7 cases per 100,000, down from 17.3 per 100,000.

Argentina has a population of 40 million people, 30 million of whom are over 15 years old.

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