

New study reveals sex to be pleasurable with or without use of a condom or lubricant

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A new study published in *The Journal of Sexual Medicine* reveals that within a nationally representative study of American men and women, sex was rated as highly arousing and pleasurable whether or not condoms and/or lubricants were used. Condoms and lubricants are commonly used by both women and men when they have sex.

Led by Debby Herbenick, PhD, MPH and Michael Reece, PhD, MPH, of the School of Public Health-Bloomington, Indiana University, researchers reviewed a nationally representative study of men and [women](#) in the United States ages 18-59 to assess characteristics of condom and lubricant use during participants' most recent sexual event, and the relationship of their condom and lubricant use to their ratings of sexual quality.

Data were from the 2009 [National Survey](#) of [Sexual Health](#) and Behavior, which involved the administration of an online questionnaire to a nationally representative probability sample of the U.S. adults. Results showed that men and women consistently rate sex as highly arousing and pleasurable with few differences based on condom or lubricant use. More than twice as many women were unsure whether the condom was lubricated (26.6% vs. 11.4%) or from what material it was made (23.6% vs. 8.9%).

"This may be because men are more likely than women to purchase condoms and to apply condoms," said Dr. Herbenick. "However, it's important for more women to become familiar with the condoms they

use with their partner so that they can make choices that enhance the safety and pleasure of their sexual experiences."

Additionally, no significant differences were found in regard to men's ratings of the ease of their erections based on condom and lubricant use.

"The U.S. continues to grapple with high rates of sexually transmitted infections, HIV, and [unintended pregnancies](#)," Dr. Herbenick notes. "We need to understand how people make choices about the products they use (or avoid using) and how these products contribute to the safety and pleasurable aspects of their sexual experiences. This is particularly important as the products themselves evolve and become more mainstream in American society. We also need to understand what men and women know, or don't know, about the products they use so that we can better target public health education messages to individuals and groups."

"The epidemiologic studies assessing human sexual function and behavior in the US that were started 60 years ago by Kinsey are continued now by Herbenik and Reese. Gathering sexual data regarding condom use is highly relevant," explained Irwin Goldstein, MD, editor-in-chief of *The Journal of Sexual Medicine*. "Understanding current [condom](#) use offers health care providers an opportunity to educate those people uncomfortable with condoms but for whom lack of use may lead to significant sexually transmitted infection health risk."

More information: Herbenick et al. "Characteristics of Condom and Lubricant Use among a Nationally Representative Probability Sample of Adults Ages 18-59 In the United States" *The Journal of Sexual Medicine* 2013. [DOI: 10.1111/jsm.12021](https://doi.org/10.1111/jsm.12021)

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