

## CONDOM

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sexually transmitted diseases as well as pregnancy," Dochnahl said.

"All the other female contraceptives only protect against pregnancy," Dochnahl said. "It is the personal responsibility of every individual to stop the spread of STDs."

Other benefits are that the female condom is not as messy as other barrier methods of contraception, and this condom provides women with an increased sense of control over condom use.

However, the female condom does have a number of drawbacks.

Although the female condom has a lower tear rate than male condoms, it wasn't as effective in stopping pregnancies. It has a 26 percent failure rate in stopping pregnancies over a year of "typical use," as compared to a 10 or 15 percent failure rate with regular condoms.

Dochnahl said this could be attributed to a variety of factors, such as unfamiliarity with the condom. She also said that during "typical use," people were not required to use the condom all the time.

Women who participated in a study of the condom said it made them feel self-conscious in front of their sex partners because the contraceptive could be seen protruding from their vaginas.

Another disadvantage is that it can be difficult to learn to insert at first, just like the diaphragm.

Dochnahl said that it would be best to use the female condom with viral-killing lubricants such as Nonoxonyl-9. She also said the female condom should not be used with a male condom.

She said the female condom is one size fits all.

In a brief survey, the Student Health Center was found to be the only place in Eugene that sells this condom. The cost is \$4.75 per three pack.

## Condoms not equal in protection

By Jim Davis

Oregon Daily Emerald

Latex condoms are highly effective for preventing HIV infection and other sexually transmitted diseases when used consistently and correctly, according to a 1993 report from the national Centers for Disease Control.

However, two different groups conducted studies that suggest all condoms are not equal in protection from sexually transmitted diseases.

The Mariposa Foundation, which conducts research on human sexuality and sexually transmitted diseases, and *Consumer's Report*, a national magazine that rates products for customers, conducted separate studies that suggest different brands of condoms offer different brands of protections.

The Mariposa Foundation tested 31 condoms and found the top six condoms that offered the best protection were: (1) Mentor made by Circle; (2) Ramses Sensitol made by Schmid; (3) Ramses Sensitol (Circle); (4) Gold Circle Coin (Circle); (5) Gold Circle (Circle); and (6) Sheik Elite (Schmid).

The study said the brands reporting the highest leakage rate and the lowest levels of protection against STDs and HIV-1 were: Contracept Plus (National Sanitary) ranked 31; Trojan Ribbed (Carter Wallace) ranked 30; Trojan Naturalube Ribbed (Carter Wallace) ranked 29; and Lifestyles Nuda (Ansell) ranked 28.

The study conducted by *Consumer's Report* tested more than 40 condoms by using a test where condoms were pumped full of air until they burst.

The magazine's study said most condoms offered a maximum of 1.5 percent failure rate if used properly, but the magazine listed eight condoms with higher failure rates.

Six of these condoms had an estimated 6 percent failure rate. These condoms were: (1) Sheik Non-lubricated Plain End; (2) Ramses Sensitol Lubricated; (3) Pleaser Ribbed Lubricated; (4) Ramses NuForm; (5) Mentor; (6) Lifestyles Nuda.

While abstinence is the only sure method of disease control, the *Consumer's Report* suggested the use of a viral killing spermicide like Nonoxonyl-9 with the condom.

## Mother of blind boy says experience best teacher



NORTHWEST

A SH - LAND (AP) — He reads just like any kid, but with his hands, he plays like any kid, but doesn't move around as much, and he sees just like any kid, with every sense but vision.

Alexander Prince is a typical, lively and inquisitive nine-year-old. He is also congenitally blind and learning to recognize his differences and adjust to them.

"Anyone who's different from me is different, whether it's a different gender or different culture," said Agafia Prince, Alexander's mother, describing the problems associated with a visually impaired or blind child trying to fit into a sighted world. "Blind people are different. You can't change that, you just accept it."

Prince said the key for a blind person to be successful and learn

is experience. The common responses of "wait" or the redundant "I'm sorry's" will never help a blind child to grow, she said. The attitude that "I'll just do it myself so it's easier and faster" may accomplish tasks faster, but sacrifices the blind child's role in them.

"He has to understand all the possibilities of what a person could mean when they say, 'There's a chair to your left,'" Prince said about her son. "When he touches it, he's not touching a chair, he's touching a corner — a fragment."

Prince used the example of stuffed animals. "They may seem like the perfect gift, but most blind people don't like them." The fur of an animal scares someone who's blind because it covers the definition of the shape.

Instead of playing with furry animals, Alexander likes to get the eggs from chickens, feed the goats and play with the parrot. "It

makes these noises — and says, 'Give me a kiss, give me a kiss,'" said Alexander of the parrot.

A popular boy whose schoolmates call him "Axi," Alexander is now at the age where he is gaining awareness of how he differs from sighted children. He hears one classmate talking to another from across the room and feels kids rushing past him, moving and talking quickly. Sometimes, "he's sad that he's different," his mother said, "and he's fighting back."

The problem, she continued, is that Alexander doesn't know how. He has spent a lot of time lately with a trained aide, which is helping him to learn but isn't contributing to the natural interaction with other kids.

"If a child is offended by someone with a disability, they won't say 'cut it out' or punch the child," said Prince. She compared it with being a stranger to a new culture. Without knowing

what is right or what is wrong, the person will often just not do anything. Blindness is a separate culture in itself too, she said. People aren't sure how to act, so many times the easiest method is to walk away.

Prince said that instead of using visual signals as a means of interpreting others, blind people need verbal communication to understand. Blind children can't understand frustrated or angry looks. They don't know that folding your arms means you're annoyed or backing away from the conversation. They don't see tears until they feel them, and they don't always understand happiness without laughter.

Learning non-verbal language in order to communicate and fit in with other kids is not only difficult, but also "trying to make someone live in a culture that they don't belong in," said Prince.

The first time Alexander was

told he was going to a camp with all blind kids his response was far from excited.

"No, I'm not!" he screamed. A week later he was on top of the world. "We had campfires, sang songs, slept in cabins," Alexander said.

"It was something bigger than confidence that he found at that camp," Prince said. "He found a whole new world that he fit into — just the way he was."

Alexander's favorite movies are *Aladdin* and *Pinochio*.

He likes the way Daffy Duck talks and mimics the animal in a funny way. He'll probably continue playing with building blocks, playing "Swan Lake" on the piano and "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star" on the classroom organ when it's raining outside and recess is indoors.

"My goal for him is independence," said Prince. "I just want him to figure it out like we can figure it out — on his own terms."

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