

# Dental Dams



## DENTAL DAMS ARE GREAT AT PROTECTING AGAINST STDs DURING ORAL SEX.

### THE FACTS

Dental dams are thin sheets of latex or polyurethane (rubber) that come in lots of different colors, sizes, and flavors. They are a great way to way to prevent the spread of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) during oral sex performed on the vagina or anus.

Dental dams get their name because they can be used during different dental procedures. But because dental dams can protect both against skin-to-skin contact and the exchange of body fluids (like semen, vaginal fluid, and blood), they are becoming a popular safe sex tool.

Keep dental dams in cool dry places and check their expiration date .

### USING DENTAL DAMS

- 1 – Check the expiration date on the dental dam package. If it is still good, unfold the dental dam and visually check it for any holes or tears.
- 2 – If the dental dam has cornstarch powder on it, rinse that off with water. Starch may cause an infection in the vagina and irritation on the anus.
- 3 – Apply water-based lubricant to the side of the dental dam that will touch your partner’s genitals. This increases your partner’s sensitivity.
- 4 – Place the dental dam over your partner’s genitals and hold it in place, so it doesn’t move too much.

- 5 – Remember that only one side of the dam should come into contact with the genitals, and one side should come into contact with the mouth.
- 6 – When you are finished performing oral sex on your partner, throw out the dam. Dental dams should be used only once.
- 7 – Wash your hands with soap and water.

**Keep in mind that when you use a dental dam, you have two safer sex goals. To prevent spreading or getting STDs you must:**

- a) prevent exchanging any body fluids (like vaginal fluid, semen, or blood) with your partner, and
- b) prevent any direct skin-to-skin contact with your partner’s genitals and your mouth.

Never use oil-based lube with

a latex dental dam. It can make it

less effective.



## Dental Dams continued...



FOR WEEKLY HEALTH TIPS

CONTESTS AND LIFE ADVICE...

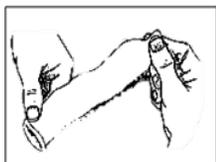
TEXT 'NATIVE' TO 24587

### BUYING DENTAL DAMS

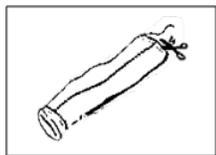
Dental dams can be challenging to find. A promising first stop for those seeking them are sexual health organizations, like Planned Parenthood, or online. You can also buy dental dams at some pharmacies, gas stations and grocery stores. Testing centers and clinics may also have them available for free.

### CREATING YOUR OWN DENTAL DAMS

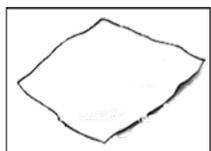
If you are having trouble finding dental dams, unlubricated or dry condoms can be made easily into good substitutes.



With scissors carefully snip off the elastic band part and tip of a condom and then cut down its length.



The resulting rectangular piece of latex or polyurethane is stretchable.



You can also cut open a medical glove, either made of latex or nitrile (for those with latex sensitivities). The easiest way to make a glove into a dental dam is to cut the four fingers off the top of the glove, and then slit down the side of the glove - leaving the thumb intact. If you do this, you can use the thumb to insert your tongue or finger into your partner while still practicing safe oral sex.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Dental dams are a great way to prevent STDs and play it safe during oral sex. If you still have questions after reading this fact sheet, check out the sites below, but also remember that your doctor, nurse or other health-care provider can provide you with more information about the resources available in your local area.

### TO LEARN MORE VISIT:

- [www.plannedparenthood.org](http://www.plannedparenthood.org)
- [www.weRnative.org](http://www.weRnative.org)

If you make a dental dam from a condom...

make sure it doesn't have a spermicide (like nonoxynol-9).

...It tastes gross and numbs your tongue.

WERNATIVE.ORG

...FOR NATIVE YOUTH BY NATIVE YOUTH

