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Condom Use for Disease Prevention Among Unmarried U.S. Women

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Among a nationally representative sample of 932 sexually experienced unmarried women aged 17-44, 41% reported using condoms for protection against sexually transmitted diseases, and 30% said they used condoms for this reason every time or most times they had intercourse. While 67% of unmarried condom users cited disease prevention as their primary motivation for choosing this method, only 4% said contraception was their sole reason for using condoms; the remaining 29% gave both reasons. Condom use for disease prevention appeared most common among young women, never-married women, those with the highest incomes, women at an early stage of their reproductive career, women who had not been surgically sterilized and were not using oral contraceptives, those who believed in the effectiveness of condoms and women who had intercourse infrequently. Results of logistic regression analysis showed that black women and those who believed condoms and spermicides are effective in protecting against disease were about twice as likely as their counterparts to use condoms for disease prevention every time or most times they had sex; women who had intercourse two or more times a week, who used the pill or who had been pregnant were about half as likely as others to do so.

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