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## Pleasure, Sex, and Condoms

Men (and women too) have complained for centuries that condom use interferes with the pleasure of sex, and the Gates challenge could surely generate some new condom designs. But there's no need to wait for pleasure-focused condom use.

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The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has made headlines with its Grand Challenge to develop "a next-generation condom that significantly preserves or enhances pleasure." The goal is to double to 10 percent the global number of men who wear condoms during sexual activity, as a strategy to reduce sexually transmitted diseases and unintended pregnancies. This is the first time that a major family planning donor has addressed the issue of sexual pleasure in connection with contraceptives and Gates deserves kudos for this move.

Men (and women too) have complained for centuries that condom use interferes with the pleasure of sex, and the Gates challenge could surely generate some new condom designs. But there's no need to wait for pleasure-focused condom use. Much has been done in recent decades to make condoms sexier, more interesting, and even better tasting.

**Condoms are fun** In Indonesia, a predominantly Muslim country of 230 million more than one billion "Sutra" (silky) and "Fiesta" brand condoms have been sold with the help of [Facebook](#), Twitter and YouTube, where talk about safe sex and condom use is uninhibited. The Indonesia campaign was initiated with strawberry (red), mint



as a 12-piece Party Pack. The condoms also come with scents to accompany the fruity taste, even including the scent of durian, a strong-smelling fruit beloved in Indonesia. Other "Fiesta" innovations in Indonesia included a "baggy" condom (with an extra-large head) and studded/dotted ones. Some brands are accompanied by a vibrating ring -- all contributing to a sense that these condoms are innovative, new and meant to enhance sexual pleasure.

***Condoms are cool*** There is no shortage of interesting, educational, and fun advertisements and social media strategies to promote condom use and link condoms with pleasurable sex. Making condoms "cool" is a great way to reach young adults. A 2012 [Condom Tester Program in Brazil](#) let users comment on condom use and tag their location via GPS to show where they have recently used a condom -- including in some unusual situations. The Condom Tester contest in 2012 sparked more than 100,000 website visits from around the world.

***Lubricants enhance sex*** Condoms lubricated with a mild anesthetizing cream help delay ejaculation and prolong the pleasure of sexual intercourse; have proved to be very popular in several countries. Other lubricants such as "Smooth Move" in [Ethiopia](#) are sold alongside condoms; they add sensations of slipperiness to the sex act.

***Condoms are available where sex is practiced*** A successful strategy initiated in Vietnam facilitates a unique distribution network by partnering with authorities in the provinces who act as a bridge between [the condom program](#) and more than 2,000 nontraditional outlets, such as bars, karaoke clubs, night clubs and hotels where sex workers are found. And, in China, condoms are distributed to millions of migrant workers and sex workers who cannot take advantage of the government's family planning services because those are generally available only to married couples and registered permanent residents; [the program](#) has had a positive impact improving the health of workers in the sex trade along the border with Vietnam, Laos, and Myanmar.



While we're waiting for the Gates challenge to produce a better engineered product, the condoms already available offer a lively smorgasbord of aromas, flavors, lubricants and shapes. Enjoy!

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