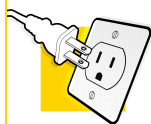


**Strategies for with effectiveness is low or uncertain** *The effectiveness of these strategies is low or uncertain and often depends on other factors. Combining them with other strategies is recommended.*



## WITHDRAWAL BEFORE EJACULATION

**Withdrawing the penis from the mouth, vagina, or anus before ejaculation**

### Description

- Withdrawal before ejaculation consists of withdrawing the penis from the mouth or anus before ejaculating when not using a condom.<sup>1</sup>
- This strategy is based on the idea that sperm contains a large amount of virus and, therefore, the risk for the person in the bottom position is reduced if they avoid contact with it.
- It is important to understand, however, that the virus is also present in pre-ejaculatory fluid (pre-cum) and this fluid can get into the mouth, the vagina, or the anus before withdrawal.
- Withdrawal before ejaculation does not protect against the transmission of other STIs.

### Effectiveness

- Withdrawal requires having good control over your sexual reflexes. Controlling ejaculation can prove to be difficult. Various contextual factors can have an influence such as your level of excitement, the location in which sex takes place, and whether you have been drinking or using drugs.<sup>1</sup>
- Practicing withdrawal is riskier than the consistent use of condoms, but has fewer risks overall than having sex but not practicing withdrawal.<sup>2</sup>
- A study assessed the risk of HIV transmission for anal sex with ejaculation at 1 infection in 70 exposures, compared to 1 in 154 if withdrawal before ejaculation is practiced.<sup>3</sup>

### Acceptability

- In the *Mobilise!* survey among men who have sex with men in Montreal, 87% of respondents knew about withdrawal before ejaculation as a risk reduction strategy.<sup>4</sup>
- In a study among MSM who reported having had anal sex without a condom, 47% said they practiced withdrawal before ejaculation.<sup>5</sup>
- For some individuals who believe in the effectiveness of withdrawal as a preventive method, this strategy offers a compromise between using condoms or not having anal sex.<sup>6,7</sup>
- Advantages of withdrawal before ejaculation:
  - This strategy is more effective than not using any strategy at all
  - It can be exciting to ejaculate on your partner.<sup>8</sup>
  - Does not require use of a service
  - No costs are involved
- Disadvantages of using withdrawal before ejaculation:
  - Requires that you have a discussion ahead of time with your partner, meaning you will need to be able to communicate and assert yourself
  - Can be difficult to stick with this strategy out in the heat of the moment and it can “ruin the fun”<sup>7</sup>
  - Requires that the person on top has good control over his ejaculation.<sup>8</sup>
  - The person on bottom does not have control over whether the strategy is actually carried out<sup>8</sup>
  - May cause feelings of sexual dissatisfaction in people for whom the exchange of sperm has an important intimate or inter-personal meaning
  - HIV is still present in pre-ejaculate (pre-cum)<sup>8</sup>
  - Does not protect against other STIs.<sup>8</sup>

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