

# Condom use soars in U.S., study finds

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ATLANTA — Condom use is increasing, with 7.9 million women saying they had their partner wear one during sex in 1995, more than double the 1982 rate.

That's up from 3.6 million in 1982, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said yesterday.

A survey of 10,847 women 15 to 44 also found that more than half of women who had intercourse for the first time between 1990 and 1995 made their partner wear a condom, up from 18 percent in the 1970s.

"Clearly, concern over HIV and sexually transmitted diseases accounted for this," said William Mosher, an agency statistician. "Most of that increase was among never-married women."

The statistics are the first released from the 1995 National Survey of Family Growth.

Health officials credit sex education for the increase in condom use. The survey found that 91 percent of 18- and 19-year-olds had been told about birth control before they turned 18, as had about 64 percent of women between 20 and 24. Questions about sex education were not asked in the 1988 survey.

Before 1980, half of women said they used some form of birth control at first intercourse. That jumped to 76 percent in the 1990s, the survey said.

"While we are celebrating that people are protecting themselves at a much higher rate, almost one quarter are not using anything," said David Landry, a research associate for the Alan Guttmacher Institute, which studies reproductive issues. "It's likely that this remaining 24 percent is a harder population to reach. We still have a ways to go."

Sterilization is still the No. 1 form of birth control, with 18 percent of women choosing it. Birth control pills are next, used by 17 percent of women, followed by 13 percent whose partners use a condom. Far down the list is the diaphragm.

"In 1982, the diaphragm was one of the top choices of unmarried, college-educated women," Mosher said. "Today, we think only 700,000 women across the United States use one."

Rarer are hormonal implants and injections and the female condom.