

CONDOM AVAILABILITY PROGRAM

Tip Sheet

PROVIDING CONDOMS TO YOUTH IN SCHOOL-BASED SETTINGS

This tip sheet provides useful steps and strategies for implementing a school-based Condom Availability Program (CAP). Successful programs exist in schools across the country and in Maine. Adapt the tips and strategies in this tip sheet as you implement a CAP that meets your school's specific needs and environment.

As teens grow and mature, they are making healthy sexual decisions - postponing sexual activity and practicing safer sex when sexually active. Schools can support teens by providing access to sexual health education and condoms, effective strategies that normalize safer sex and build skills while preventing unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs).



MAKING A CASE FOR A CONDOM AVAILABILITY PROGRAM

Experience from schools and research on Condom Availability Programs provide a compelling case for implementing a school-based program. The information below can help build support for implementing a CAP.

1


Teens experience obstacles in accessing condoms, including embarrassment, cost, lack of transportation, and limited locations where they can purchase condoms confidentially. These obstacles are even more pronounced in rural areas, which includes much of Maine.

2

Youth with access to condoms in schools does not result in increased sexual activity. (1) Education and access to services increases responsible decision-making and healthy outcomes for youth, including declines in teen pregnancy rates. Data shows that students are waiting longer to have sex and using condoms and birth control when they are sexually active. (2)

3

Sexually transmitted infection rates are on the rise, with half of all new STI cases occurring among people ages 15-24. (3) CAPs, along with safer sex education, provide teens with the information and skills they will need to make healthy, responsible sexual decisions.

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For more information on the benefits and implementation of school-based Condom Availability Programs, visit the CDC Adolescent and School Health website for the components of a successful CAP. <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/healthservices/caps/index.htm>

BEFORE YOU GET STARTED



Find Allies in Your School and Community. Begin conversations with your school administrators to determine the level of support for creating a CAP. Identify other decision makers, such as school board members, health staff, and health or wellness groups, to assess and build support. Identify parents, community members, health professionals, and student leaders for their input. Conduct polls, focus groups, or surveys to gauge support for a CAP in your school.



Identify a Source of Condoms. Identify how condom supplies will be obtained or funded. Are there local resources which can offer condom supplies or provide necessary funding? Will the cost of condoms be included in the school's budget?



Develop Policies and Procedures. Work with your school leadership to determine what policies need to be in place before launching a CAP (see page 3). Develop a new committee or use a standing committee to oversee and support the program, making sure to include input from student members. Consider where, how, and who will be involved in condom distribution.

IMPLEMENT YOUR PROGRAM



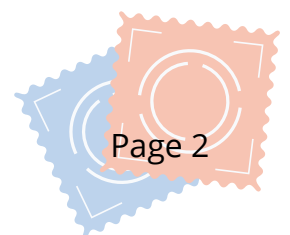
Meet with Key Individuals. Review the procedures for how you will provide condoms to students. Include any forms or documentation you will need to evaluate program use and success. Engage your CAP committee members and student leaders for their input.



Provide Education. Coordinate with health education staff to identify what is offered for sexual health education in your school. If sexual health is not offered, consider how to provide students with education around correct condom use.



Create Awareness. Engage student leaders and groups to promote the CAP. Organize school-wide campaigns, share information in student newspapers or in morning announcements. Identify awareness campaigns, such as National Youth HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, National STI Awareness Month, and National Condom Awareness Day, to promote condom use.



Building a Plan for Success

Starting a Condom Availability Program

DEVELOPING POLICIES, PROCEDURES, & PARENT PERMISSIONS

CAP policies and procedures vary from school to school. Consider your school's needs and review the suggested ideas below for ways to implement the program and communicate with parents.

For examples of policies and procedures, contact education@mainefamilyplanning.org



Policies. Schools can create a stand-alone policy on making condoms available or embed it in an existing policy on delivering health services. For example, condoms can be listed as one of the health services in the school's handbook.



Procedures. CAP procedures should meet the needs of students and the school environment. The best procedures are often simple, flexible, and developed with student input. Include in the procedure how you will offer information and education on correct condom use.



Permissions. Provide information about the CAP for parents/guardians to learn more and a way to ask questions. Transparency can reduce misinformation. Communication can include sending out a parent letter detailing student health services, including the CAP, or through a note in the student handbook, school newsletter, or parent portal. Instructions should be clear on how parents/guardians can opt their student(s) out of participating in the CAP.

SUSTAINING YOUR PROGRAM



Budget for Supplies. Plan to cover costs in each budget cycle to ensure the program's success and longevity.



Monitor and Evaluate Progress. Keep track of the number of condoms distributed and number of students that access the program. Gather student input through anonymous surveys and ask for their suggestions on ways to improve the program.



Communicate Success. Use the data you collect to keep the program on track and communicate program success to the wider school community.

We are here to help! If you have any questions about developing and maintaining a condom availability program, reach out to us at education@mainefamilyplanning.org.



CONDOM AVAILABILITY RESOURCES



Total Access Group
Your Key to Prevention!

Affordable options for purchasing condoms at [Global Protection Corp](#) and [Total Access Group](#).



CDC's factsheets - [How to Use a Condom](#) and [How to Use an Oral Dam](#).
Web MD video - [How to Use Condom](#)

NOT READY TO PROVIDE CONDOMS?

If your school is not able to implement a Condom Availability Program, here are some ways to create a positive culture for helping youth access barrier methods, now or in the future.

- **Provide education on barrier method use.** Prepare youth by normalizing discussion around safer sex practices and build skills for accessing and using condoms and oral dams.
- **Identify places where barrier methods are available.** This may be a local family planning clinic or doctor's office, store, or online vendor. Have them research and explore their community to find these locations.
- **Problem-solve challenges in accessing barrier methods.** Whether it's transportation, discomfort, or cost – provide opportunities for youth to brainstorm solutions and identify trusted people who can help.
- **Encourage communication.** Practice communication skills and consent in using barrier methods so young people will be more likely and ready for these conversations with a partner, when and if the moment arises.

Data Sources for this Tip Sheet

1. Andrzejewski J, Liddon N, Leonard S. Condom availability programs in schools: A review of the literature. *Am J Health Promotion*. 2019;33(3):457-467.
2. Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/index.htm> and Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey (MIYHS) <https://www.maine.gov/miyhs/>
3. CDC Sexually Transmitted Diseases Data and Statistics <https://www.cdc.gov/std/statistics/default.htm>

