

Eco-Friendlier Condoms

Last May, I wrote an article for LWM about how to become an Eco-sexual and Go Green in the Bedroom. This year, I wanted to focus the discussion specifically on Condoms. There are some really great planet-conscious prophylactics out there; unfortunately you won't find them in most drug stores. In the United States, an estimated 450 Million condoms are sold each year. As you know from reading the article last year, not all condoms are created equal. Natural rubber latex condoms are one of your best choices in terms of biodegradability, second only to Lambskin condoms. Lambskin condoms; however, do not protect against sexually transmitted infections, thus we turn our attention back to natural rubber latex.

There are currently several companies out there that are manufacturing and selling better condoms to help us in our quest for a cleaner planet. Two of my favorites make the top of the list, because for every condom you purchase through their company, they will donate one to countries that have the highest HIV prevalence rates.

- 1. Love Begins with L.** L. Condoms market themselves as “a company dedicated to world changing sex.” And they mean it! Their condoms are made from the highest grade materials; which include a lubricant that is glycerin-free and paraben-free. Their natural rubber latex condoms are made without any harmful additives and are vegan friendly. In addition, they use minimal plastic in their packaging! If *all* of this weren't wonderful enough, they also distribute condoms to developing countries in need. They report, “If just 1 out of every 20 people purchasing condoms chooses L. we can serve the prevention needs of the 3 countries with the highest HIV prevalence rates.” To top it all off, they are one of the most affordable of the ones on my list, priced at \$5 for a 3-pack, and FREE shipping on orders over \$10 through their website! L. condoms have earned themselves the #1 spot for me! You can purchase their products directly through their website at: <http://thisisl.com> or you can purchase through amazon.com, using keywords: “love begins with L. condoms.”
- 2. Sir Richard's** This company also uses 100% natural rubber latex, is vegan friendly (PETA certified), and uses a chemical free lubricant. In addition, they also have a company donation policy that for every condom purchased, they will donate one to a country with a high risk of sexually transmitted infections. Their products cost approximately \$5 for a 3-pack, however, there is added shipping and handling charges, depending on what you buy and where you live. Their products can be purchased through their website at: www.sirrichards.com or you can purchase them through amazon.com. It is of note that some varieties and/or quantities on amazon had lower shipping rates.
- 3. GLYDE** Their condoms are also made from plant-based materials, including natural rubber latex and thistle extract. In addition to being vegan friendly (PETA certified), they also advertise that they are Fair Trade Partners. They state, “Our natural rubber latex is sourced from owner-operated plantations, and our manufacturing facility in Malaysia pays its workers a fair living wage.” What puts them down here in my #3 spot? They seem to only sell their products in packs of 10 or more (up to 100 on their website!). The most important attribute of a condom is that IT GETS USED. ☺ Unfortunately, if a customer purchases a pack of 10, and doesn't like the feel of it, that's 9 that will likely be tossed out into the garbage. In addition,

their prices for a 10-pack are approximately \$16, plus shipping, making it even less likely that a new customer will invest in this wonderful product. However, their products can be purchased through their website at: www.glydeamerica.com or through amazon.com.

4. **French Letter Condoms** This is a U.K. brand, but deserves to be here nonetheless. They use all natural rubber latex from organic farms. The rubber is also harvested under sustainable, fair trade conditions. They report, “By purchasing French Letter Condoms, consumers are guaranteeing higher wages and better living conditions for rubber trappers in South Asia.” The only drawback? You can only purchase their products through their website, and the products are shipped from overseas. If you don’t mind waiting a little longer and paying extra for shipping, they do have some attractive deals. Currently, their website is offering a sale of “3 packs for the price of 2.” They cost approximately \$13.50 for a 12-pack (£ 8.99), plus shipping.

I hope you’ll consider trying one of these amazing earth-friendly brands! They not only strive to help you take care of you, they also work hard to take care of our planet. Please remember that Natural Rubber Latex condoms are biodegradable, **when not under water**. Please dispose of them safely by wrapping them in tissue and discarding into the trash, not a toilet.

I would love to hear customer feedback about experiences with these companies and/or with their products. Please feel free to email me with your experiences, thoughts, or suggestions.

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Dr. Dianna Palimere is a Psychosexual Therapist and Licensed Clinical Social Worker. She has been in the field of mental health for the past 12 years, dedicating the past seven years to specializing in clinical sexuality. She holds a Bachelors degree in Psychology, a Masters degree in Social Work, a Masters degree in Human Sexuality Education, and a PhD in Clinical Human Sexuality. Utilizing a holistic approach to therapy, she incorporates a variety of clinical interventions in her work with individuals, couples, and families. She is devoted to helping people achieve sexual health and healing through her work as a psychotherapist in her private practice in Pike Creek, DE; as well as in her work with local nonprofit organizations. To learn more about her or to schedule an appointment, visit her website: www.SexTherapyInDelaware.com or email her directly at: dr.palimere@sextherapyindelaware.com