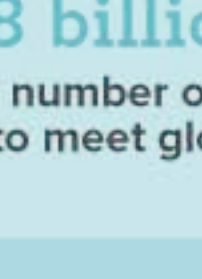


THE STORY OF THE CONDOM

The making of a hero

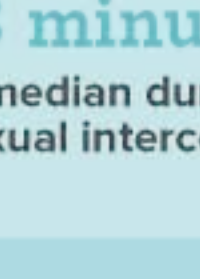
Meet our humble hero, the life-saving condom.

It's a tough journey becoming a UNFPA approved condom. Here we follow the footsteps of the courageous condom.



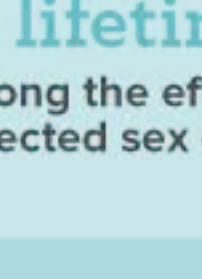
18 billion

Estimated number of condoms required to meet global need.



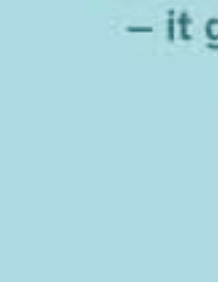
7.3 minutes

The median duration of sexual intercourse.



A lifetime

How long the effects of unprotected sex can last.



Choice not chance

A condom can be life-changing – it gives people the ability to control their lives.

98%

Rate of effectiveness when used **consistently** and **correctly**.



According to WHO, more than **1 million people** acquire a sexually transmitted infection **every day**.



Therefore, high quality condoms are of particular importance in guarding against potentially **life-threatening STIs** and **preventing unintended pregnancies**.



Without the help of our hero, these factors could affect someone for the rest of their lives.



The Pre-qualification Process

In order to become a UNFPA approved condom, manufacturers must first pass 'prequalification'.



EOI
UNFPA publishes an 'Expression of Interest'.

Submission
If interested, manufacturers respond by submitting the required documentation.

Review
UNFPA technical experts conduct a detailed review of submitted documents. If satisfactory, a factory inspection is arranged.

Inspection/Testing
During the inspection, sampling from 3 batches are sent to an independent 17025 ISO-accredited laboratory for testing.

Pass/Listed
Applicants that have successfully met documentation, inspection and test requirements are added to the WHO/UNFPA list of male condom factories.

Fail/Reapply
If requirements aren't met, the manufacturer is encouraged to put in corrective actions and reapply. Prequalified factories must reapply every three years to maintain prequalified status.

This process can take 3 – 12 months as it depends on a number of factors:

- Scheduling of Inspection
- Laboratory Testing
- Factory Capacity
- Factory commitment to implement corrective measures
- Possible Re-Inspection

3

Every 3 years – Manufacturers must be re-inspected to maintain their prequalification status.



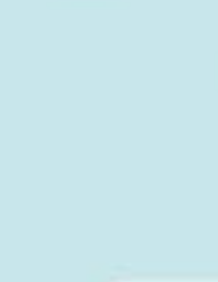
Since 2001, over 70 factories have applied to gain prequalification by the UNFPA.



Just 26 out of the 70 factories are **currently prequalified**.

Once a prequalification status is under the manufacturer's belt, our hero still has far to go.

Now they must compete for the award of a Long Term Agreement (LTA) with UNFPA, according to public sector procurement practices.



International Bidding Process Led By UNFPA

Only prequalified manufacturers can **bid for an agreement** to supply condoms for UNFPA. This bidding process can take several months.

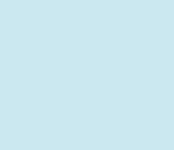
3

If successful, the selected manufacturer will hold an LTA with UNFPA for **3 years**.



14

The number of condom manufacturers who currently have an LTA with UNFPA.



The Order Process

Buyers can **choose 18 types** of condoms in a variety of sizes, colors, textures, scents, flavors and shapes from the online catalog.

1

A government or NGO requests a quotation from UNFPA.

2

30-day binding quote is sent by UNFPA.

3

The government or NGO pays the invoice and the order is placed.

Length of time:
7 - 8 weeks

(depending on client feedback)

Production

Finally, the factories can get to work manufacturing these little latex life-savers.

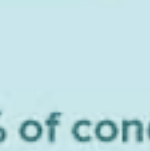
Length of time:
2-16 weeks

(depending on whether sourced from stock or fresh production)



Quality Testing (Sampling and Testing)

During the production process, **100% of condoms are electronically tested** by the manufacturer and internal quality control tests are performed.



Our hero and his friends are **hand-packed** into boxes.

Sampling and inspection is then conducted by independent sampling agents appointed by UNFPA. The samples are sent to an ISO 17025 accredited laboratory for independent quality control testing.

Length of time:
2 weeks

(this is referred to as pre-shipment testing)

Shipment

Condoms are only shipped if they pass pre-shipment testing. Once they pass, the batch is released for shipment, and our hero can **begin his trip around the world**.

Length of time:
2-6 weeks

(depending on destination)

Length of time:
1 week



Arrival at port of destination

Upon arrival, our hero must **pass through customs clearance**. Our hero and his life-saving friends are then transported a warehouse where they can be distributed to health clinics, health centers and hospitals.

Finally our humble hero reaches his user.

How UNFPA Can Help

Around the world, those seeking condoms may face stockouts, poor quality, or counterfeit products.

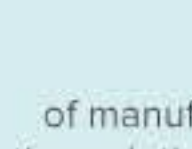
35%

of manufacturers who have gone through the rigorous prequalification process **have successfully passed**, since 2001.

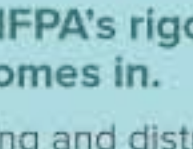
Poor quality condoms put people's health and future plans in jeopardy. **This is where UNFPA's rigorous process comes in.**

The production, testing and distribution requirements mean that people can be confident that the condoms procured by UNFPA meet very high standards.

It's not an easy job to become a UNFPA approved condom, but somebody's got to do it.



In 2013 alone, UNFPA delivered contraceptives to **118 countries**, providing **56 million couple years** of protection.



Next time you're planning your own 7.3 minutes of fun, you can be sure that these little heroes can stand up to the challenge.

Additional Sources
Facts About Condoms allaboutcondoms.org
Facts sheet - Sexually transmitted infections who.int/en
Best sex within 13 minutes, says research [Journal of Sex Research, Aug; 41\(3\): 30-9](http://Journal of Sex Research, Aug; 41(3): 30-9)