

Call to Discontinue Nonoxynol-9 for Rectal Use

We, the undersigned, in light of recent statements by the World Health Organization and the Centers for Disease Control, urge all people to cease the rectal use of products containing Nonoxynol-9 (N-9). We are concerned that many people mistakenly believe that N-9 provides extra protection against HIV and STDs when used rectally when in fact there is reason to think that rectal use of N-9 may increase risk of infection.

The Centers for Disease Control states: "...N-9 can damage the cells lining the rectum, thus providing a portal of entry for HIV and other sexually transmissible agents. Therefore, N-9 should not be used as a microbicide or lubricant during anal sex."

The World Health Organization states: "N-9 should not be used rectally." (Further) "There is no published scientific evidence that N-9-lubricated condoms provide any additional protection against pregnancy or STIs compared with condoms lubricated with other products. Since adverse effects due to the addition of N-9 to condoms cannot be excluded, such condoms should no longer be promoted."

N-9 is an ingredient that is contained in three types of over-the-counter products: in contraceptive products designed exclusively for vaginal use (diaphragm jelly, contraceptive foams and creams); in some sexual lubricants; and on the outer lubrication in some lubricated condoms.

Given the evidence cited above, we call on manufacturers of condoms and sexual lubricants to discontinue adding N-9 to future lots of their product. Consumers should examine labels of lubricants they use for anal sex to ensure that the product does not contain N-9. Providers should advise clients not to use rectally products that are designed for other purposes; specifically, vaginal foams, gels or creams that contain N-9 for contraceptive purposes should not be used rectally.

We are not calling for the removal of N-9 contraceptive products designed exclusively for vaginal use because they remain an important contraceptive option for women who are at low risk of HIV infection or other STDs. Moreover, evidence suggests that N-9 is considerably more toxic at low doses when used in the rectum than the vagina.

In light of the deleterious side effects of rectal use associated with products containing N-9, it is essential that we identify a lubricant safe for rectal use. Therefore, we further call on the public health community and lubricant manufacturers to undertake safety studies in humans to establish minimally that products marketed explicitly or implicitly for rectal use do not cause disruption of the rectal epithelium, as does N-9.

Finally we emphasize the importance of on-going research to develop vaginal and rectal microbicides that are both safe and effective. It is imperative that truly effective microbicides be developed as soon as possible and we commit ourselves to this ongoing effort. A safe and effective microbicide can be developed, but N-9 is not this product.

Signed:

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Global Campaign for Microbicides

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Dr. Mitchell Creinin
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Lagos, Nigeria

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Dr. John Gerofi
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Dr. David Gershon
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Dr. Michael Gross
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Organizations:

Academy for Educational Development
Washington, DC

AIDS Action
Baltimore

AIDS Action
Washington, DC

AIDS Alliance for Children, Youth and Families
Washington, DC

AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power
Atlanta, GA

AIDS Foundation of Chicago
Chicago, Illinois

AIDS Research Alliance
West Hollywood, CA

AIDS Survival Project
Atlanta, GA

AIDS Treatment Data Network
New York, NY

AIDS Treatment Initiatives
Atlanta, GA

AIDS Treatment News
Philadelphia, PA

AIDS Vaccine Advocacy Coalition
Washington D.C.

Alan Guttmacher Institute
New York, NY

Alliance for Microbicide Development
Silver Spring, MD

American Foundation for AIDS Research
New York, NY

American Social Health Association
Research Triangle Park, NC

Asian & Pacific Islander Wellness Center
San Francisco, CA

Assoc. of Reproductive Health Professionals
Washington D.C.

Australian Federation of AIDS Organization
Sydney, Australia

Australian Society for HIV Medicine
New South Wales

Black Educational AIDS Project
Baltimore, MD

Boston Women's Health Book Collective
Boston, MA

Cairde
Dublin, Ireland

The California Microbicides Initiative
Los Angeles, CA

Center for Women's Policy Studies
Washington, D.C.

European AIDS Treatment Group
Europe

Family Health International
Research Triangle Park, UK

Family Planning Association
London, UK

Feminist Women's Health Center
Atlanta, Georgia

Foundation for Integrative AIDS Research
Brooklyn, NY

Gay and Lesbian Medical Association
San Francisco, CA

Gay Men's Health Crisis
New York, NY

Global AIDS Action Network
San Francisco, CA

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Howard Brown Health Center
Chicago, IL

Ibis Reproductive Health
Cambridge, MA

International AIDS Vaccine Initiative
New York, NY

International Center for Research on Women
Washington DC

International Council of AIDS Services Orgs.
Toronto, Canada

International Family Health
London, UK

International Foundation for Alternative
Research on Aids
Portland, OR

The International HIV/AIDS Alliance
Brighton, UK

International Partnership for Microbicides
Washington, DC

International Women's Health Coalition
New York, NY

John Snow, Inc
Boston, MA

Latina Women's Health Organization
Washington, DC

Latino Commission on AIDS
New York, NY

Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Center
Los Angeles, CA

Microbicides as an Alternative Solution
Berkley, CA

National AIDS Trust
London, UK

National Women's Health Network
Washington, DC

National Family Planning and Reproductive
Health Association (NFPRHA)
Washington, DC

No Limit for Women Project
Yaounde, Cameroon

Planned Parenthood Federation of America
New York, NY

Program for Appropriate Technology in Health
Seattle, WA

Project Inform
San Francisco, CA

Reproductive Health Matters
London, UK

Reproductive Health Technologies Project
Washington, DC

San Francisco AIDS Foundation
San Francisco, CA

SIECUS
New York, NY

Terrence Higgins Trust
London, UK

Treatment Action Group
New York, NY

WGBAN HIV Care Network
Brooklyn, New York