Consultation

PHARMAC
TE PĀTAKA WHAIORANGA

Proposal to fund sexual health products

9 November 2026

What we're proposing

We are seeking feedback on a proposal to fund the Cupid brand of internal condoms and water-based lubricant sachets in the community from **1 April 2027**.

Internal condoms would be funded with no restrictions, when prescribed for any relevant use.

Water-based lubricant would be funded when prescribed with funded condoms (internal and external condoms).

Both products would give people more options for safer sex and reduce the transmission of sexually transmitted infections (STIs). We anticipate this proposal would benefit tens of thousands of New Zealanders each year.

Consultation closes at **5:00pm, Friday 20 November 2026** and feedback can be submitted via our online form.

What would the effect be?

From 1 April 2027, internal condoms would be funded when prescribed for any relevant use, and water-based lubricant would be funded when prescribed with any funded condoms.

We anticipate that the proposal to fund internal condoms would benefit around 900 people and tens of thousands of people who use funded condoms would benefit from funding of water-based lubricant.

Both products would be available via prescription, where they could be collected from a community pharmacy. They would also be available on Practitioner's Supply Order (PSO).

Who we think will be interested

- People who may be using or considering using internal condoms and/or water-based lubricant
- People who use external condoms
- Organisations and healthcare professionals, including general practitioners who provide sexual health support and services
- Groups who support sexual health
- Te Whatu Ora | Health New Zealand
- Pharmacies
- Pharmaceutical suppliers and wholesalers

About sexually transmitted infections and these products

Sexually transmitted infections

STIs such as chlamydia, syphilis and Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) are infections that people can get from having unprotected sex or sexual activity. If not treated, some STIs may lead to health consequences such as pelvic inflammatory disease, infertility, or an increased risk of getting AIDS. Some STIs, such as human papillomavirus (HPV), can also increase the risk of, or cause certain cancers.

Internal Condoms

Internal condoms provide a barrier that stops sperm, bacteria, infections, and viruses, from passing between people when they have sex. They help to reduce STI transmission and unintended pregnancy.

The proposed internal condom brand, Cupid, is made of latex.

Water-based lubricant

Water-based lubricant ("lube") is a liquid or gel that reduces the friction of two surfaces rubbing together. When used with condoms, water-based lubricant is effective at reducing the likelihood of condoms breaking. This makes condoms more effective at protecting against STIs. Water-based lubricant can be used with latex and non-latex condoms.

Health NZ | Te Whatu Ora's safer sex advice notes that condoms should be used with water-based lubricant, as this reduces the risk of condom breakage.

Why we're proposing this

Internal condoms

Pharmac has an open funding application for internal condoms for STI prevention and contraception, which is currently ranked on Pharmac's Options for Investment list.

Our expert advisors were supportive of internal condoms being funded and considered that funding internal condoms would provide "receiving" partners with a funded product which would offer autonomy for barrier STI protection and contraception (currently only external ("male") condoms are funded).

Water-based lubricant

Pharmac has an open funding application for water-based, non-irritant lubricant sachets for use with funded condoms. Our expert advisors were supportive of water-based lubricant sachets being funded and told us that condoms are less likely to break or tear if water-based lubricants are used.

If funded, we anticipate internal condoms and lubricant would help people have safer sex, through increased choice and reduced condom breakage, meaning less STI transmission.

Procurement Process

In December 2024, Pharmac released a competitive procurement process (a Request for Proposals, "RFP") to source a brand of internal condoms and a brand of water-based

lubricant. We ran a competitive process as there are multiple suppliers of internal condoms and water-based lubricant. As a government entity, Pharmac must comply with the Government Procurement Rules and ensure our procurement processes are fair and open.

Global Medics was selected as the preferred supplier for internal condoms through this process, and we have entered into a provisional agreement for the supply of its brand of internal condoms, Cupid.

Global Medics was also selected as the preferred supplier for water-based lubricant, and we have entered into a provisional agreement for the supply of its brand of lubricant, Cupid.

We also requested proposals for different pack types of water-based lubricant, including multi-use containers 50 g to 499 g and 500 g or more. We are not proposing to fund these products as part of this process.

Details about our proposal

Internal Condoms

Internal condoms would be listed as female condoms in Section B of the Pharmaceutical Schedule from 1 April 2027, without restriction, as follows:

CHEMICAL	FORMULATION	BRAND	PACK SIZE
Female (internal) condoms	75 mm, natural Natural colour ring positioner	Cupid	10 OP
Female (internal) condoms	75 mm, natural Natural colour ring positioner	Cupid	100 OP

Original Pack ("OP") dispensing would be applied, which would mean that the subsidised quantity could be rounded up to the size of the pack. This would mean that community pharmacies would not need to split the 100 pack of condoms when dispensing a prescription.

In addition to prescriptions, internal condoms would also be available on a Practitioners Supply Order (PSO), with a maximum PSO amount of 50 condoms (i.e. five packs).

Pharmac ran this competitive process in reference to "internal condoms". However, the Pharmaceutical Schedule listing would reference "female condoms" to reflect the language used on the condom packet and in the Contraception, Sterilisation, and Abortion Act 1977, which details the standards required for compliance. Pharmac acknowledges that internal condoms may be used by people of any gender.

Internal condoms would be funded in the community setting only. They would not be listed in any part of Section H of the Pharmaceutical Schedule.

Water-based lubricant

Water-based lubricant would be listed in Section B of the Pharmaceutical Schedule from 1 April 2027, as follows:

CHEMICAL	FORMULATION	BRAND	PACK SIZE
Water-based lubricant	4 ml sachet	Cupid	10 sachets OP

Water-based lubricant would be funded subject to endorsement criteria, as follows:

a) Maximum 60 sachets per prescription.
b) Up to 60 sachets available on a PSO.
c) Subsidy by endorsement -
For a person who has also been prescribed condoms and prescription is endorsed accordingly. Pharmacists may annotate the prescription as endorsed where there exists a record of prior dispensing of condoms.

Note: prescription is considered endorsed if lubricant is prescribed in conjunction with condoms.

In addition to prescriptions, water-based lubricant sachets would also be available on a Practitioners Supply Order (PSO), with a maximum PSO amount of 60 sachets.

A dispensing maximum of 60 sachets per prescription has been proposed to align with the maximum dispensing amounts for most funded condoms.

Original Pack ("OP") dispensing would be applied, which would mean that the subsidised quantity could be rounded up to the size of the pack. This would mean that community pharmacies would not need to split the 10 pack of sachets when dispensing a prescription.

The proposed water-based lubricant brand, Cupid, has the following ingredients: ethylenediaminetetraacetic acid, sodium hydroxide, purified water, carbopol, sodium benzoate and glycerin. The lubricant has a pH of 5.5-7.0 and an osmolality of less or equal to 1200 mOSm/kg.

Water-based lubricant would be funded in the community setting only. It would not be listed in any part of Section H of the Pharmaceutical Schedule.

To provide feedback

Complete our online form by **5:00pm, Friday 20 November 2026.**

All feedback received before the closing date will be considered by Pharmac's Board (or its delegate) prior to making a decision on this proposal.

Your feedback may be shared

When you give feedback on a consultation, your feedback becomes official information that Pharmac holds. Pharmac has legal responsibilities for how we manage this official information, under laws such as the Official Information Act and Privacy Act.

Pharmac may receive a request from people for official information, which could include your feedback. Legally, Pharmac must consider whether your feedback should be released.

We will consider your views when assessing whether the feedback has to be released. Tell us if there is anything about your feedback that you would prefer wasn't released.

If your feedback is proposed for release, then Pharmac will contact you, unless there is a legal reason that we can't.

Note that Pharmac collects and holds your information in line with our Privacy Statement.