Fun with Dick and Jane

At last, a latex that’s ready before you are

October 1, 1997 By John Hammond

A barrier method with fashion appeal? The latest entry in the tortoise race to develop woman-controlled HIV prevention is the Janesway (as in Jane “Everywoman” Doe). Disposable cotton panties with a latex panel that protects the vagina while allowing full penetration, the Janesway has it all over traditional male condoms: It can be worn in advance, so there’s no interruption between foreplay and intercourse. “Other condoms are shaped like the outside of a man,” said Jane Hunnicutt, president of Janesway inventor HHH Development Co., Inc. “The Janesway is shaped like the inside of a woman.” The latex panel unfolds and clings to the walls of the vagina. “I tried it myself recently,” said Hunnicutt, a resident of Sonoma County, the area with the highest rate of rural AIDS in the country. “It works great. It stays in place.” Plus, since it covers the entire female genital area, Janesway may offer better protection against herpes and warts.

Classed as a medical device, the Janesway needs an FDA nod before it can be marketed; Hunnicutt is awaiting a grant to launch a 200-couple clinical trial. She envisions a day when the plain cotton model is accompanied by more imaginative numbers with replaceable latex panels - anything from lace to G-strings to black leather. A reusable pantie-less version is even in the works.

For Hunnicutt, it’s Janesway or the highway. “The word condom is stigmatized, so we’re calling Janesway ’a new prevention device worn by the woman during sex,’” she said. “Femidom - the female condom in Europe - means ’stupid woman.’ I’m sorry, I don’t want to wear something that means that. We’re trying to change human behavior and attitudes.”

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