

THE SABS ENCOURAGES THE USE OF CERTIFIED CONDOMS ON WORLD AIDS DAY

The South African Bureau of Standards (SABS) encourages South Africans to engage in safe sexual practices by using SABS certified condoms. **World Aids Day** observed on 01 December globally is a reminder to everyone that HIV/AIDS is still prevalent and precautions are necessary.

“According to Statistics South Africa, the total number of people living with HIV in 2021 is approximately 8.2 million. At the SABS, we take all matters of public health and consumer safety very seriously and while the world is focussing on fighting Covid-19, we also want to remind South Africans that the HIV pandemic also requires sustained attention and that all citizens should continue to use condoms and practice safe sex,” says Jodi Scholtz, the Lead Administrator of the SABS.

The testing and certification of condoms, in South Africa, is mandatory and the SABS is the appointed certification body for the National Department of Health and National Treasury and is contracted to conduct the testing and certification of all public health condoms. The ‘*SABS Approved*’ mark appears on all government issued condoms, which are branded as MAX condoms. MAX condoms are available for free to all South Africans at various distribution points.

Scholtz advises that SABS has a dedicated condom testing facility that ensures that all batches of condoms are tested in strict laboratory conditions, in accordance to stringent criteria and that consumers can rest assured that all *SABS Approved* products are safe to use. Should the SABS experience any sample failure, the entire batch of condoms will be disqualified so as to ensure that no defective products will enter the market.

Additional safety precautions by the user include a visual inspection to ensure that individual packets are not leaking, torn or broken, been exposed to extreme heat or expired. Condoms help in the prevention of unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV.

The SABS also certifies and tests other brands of condoms according to the criteria contained in *SANS/ISO 4074: requirements for natural rubber latex condoms*. MAX condoms are tested to SANS/ISO 4074 as well as additional criteria set by the National Department of Health and at a higher testing frequency, thus ensuring a superior quality.

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