Dual Protection (DP) is an essential component of comprehensive family planning services and reproductive health care. Dual Protection is the use of condoms to reduce the risk of sexually transmitted disease (STD) exposure and a contraceptive method to reduce the likelihood of unintended pregnancy. Sexual activity without dual protection will likely result in pregnancy and/or an STD for many patients. Dual protection is a reproductive health standard of care.

Many patients are unaware of their personal risk of acquiring a STD. Most do not have candid discussions with their sex partners about STD or other (previous or current) sex partners. All sexually active patients should receive evidence-based information about and support to adopt dual protection methods. Patients should be encouraged to have male or female condoms on hand.

**Basic Practices: Dual Protection (DP) and Condom Use**

- Assess and discuss with patients their personal risk of unintended pregnancy and acquiring an STD.

- Initiate an explanation of the DP concept: the use of condoms to reduce risk of STD and the use of a contraceptive method to prevent unintended pregnancy. Provide evidence-based information on the effectiveness of condoms for dual protection.

- Provide information for correct use of condoms. Do not assume patients understand correct use.

- Encourage and support sexually active patients to use dual protection. Discuss/role-play how patients can discuss condom use with sexual partner(s).

- Encourage sexually active patients to keep a supply of condoms on-hand: three dozen male and two female condoms as recommended by the DPH-Family Planning/Reproductive Health Program.

- Routinely inquire if patients presently have condoms on-hand. Re-supply as needed. Do not hesitate and assume patients will ask about or request condoms.

- Encourage patients to contact the office with any contraceptive or STD-related question or problem, including a re-supply of condoms.

Adopt patient-responsive practices that create a convenient and discreet environment for patients to obtain condoms. Have male and female condoms on-site for patient convenience. Embarrassment can be a barrier to patients asking for condoms. Do not wait for patients to ask about dual protection or to request condoms. Initiate discussions about dual protection and offer condoms.