

AIDS lecture. February 10 1987

Statement of  
C. Everett Koop, MD, ScD  
Before the Committee on Energy and Commerce  
U.S. House of Representatives  
February 10, 1987

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This is not a lecture; it is a statement made by the Surgeon General before the Committee on Energy and Commerce, of the U.S. House of Representatives. It was made 8 days after my previous lecture on AIDS. I had previously made a statement to them about AIDS in general, and the Surgeon General's report; this statement had to do specifically with condoms and much of it is technical in nature concerning the safety of condoms based upon their construction with latex or animal membranes.

This was an unusual subject to have a committee of the House of Representatives investigating and an anecdote that took place in my own home might explain the climate of the times better than anything else. As was my custom on the morning that I was to give this statement, my wife and I were having an early breakfast and discussing my activities of the day and I told her that I would be addressing a House Committee with a prepared statement. She wanted to know on what subject and I told her, condoms. Her response was, "I'm glad your mother's dead".

The tone of this statement is factual; it also has laboratory data. I also pointed out that statistics of efficacy about condoms applied to contraception could not be carried over in application to the prevention of sexually transmitted disease.

This was the first time that I had made it clear that one of the reasons why condoms failed to protect against sexually transmitted disease was that they were not worn "from start to finish (i.e. during foreplay) in a sexual encounter".

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(Because this was a testimony before a Congressional Committee where every word is important no index is provided for this very short document.)