

NYC mayor rejects Catholic condom-nation

Bloomberg defends contraceptive giveaway as 'real world' way to fight HIV

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NEW YORK - New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg on Friday defended the city's free condom program as a "real world" tactic to fight HIV and AIDS.

Catholic leaders publicly chastised city officials for the program Thursday, saying it was immoral. They charged City Hall with failing to protect "the moral tone" of the community by encouraging "inappropriate sexual activity."

On his weekly radio show, Bloomberg says it's not an issue of faith, but rather a health issue for the city. The mayor said Catholic leaders can communicate what they feel is proper behavior to their followers, but the city is trying to find ways to reduce the rate of sexually transmitted diseases.

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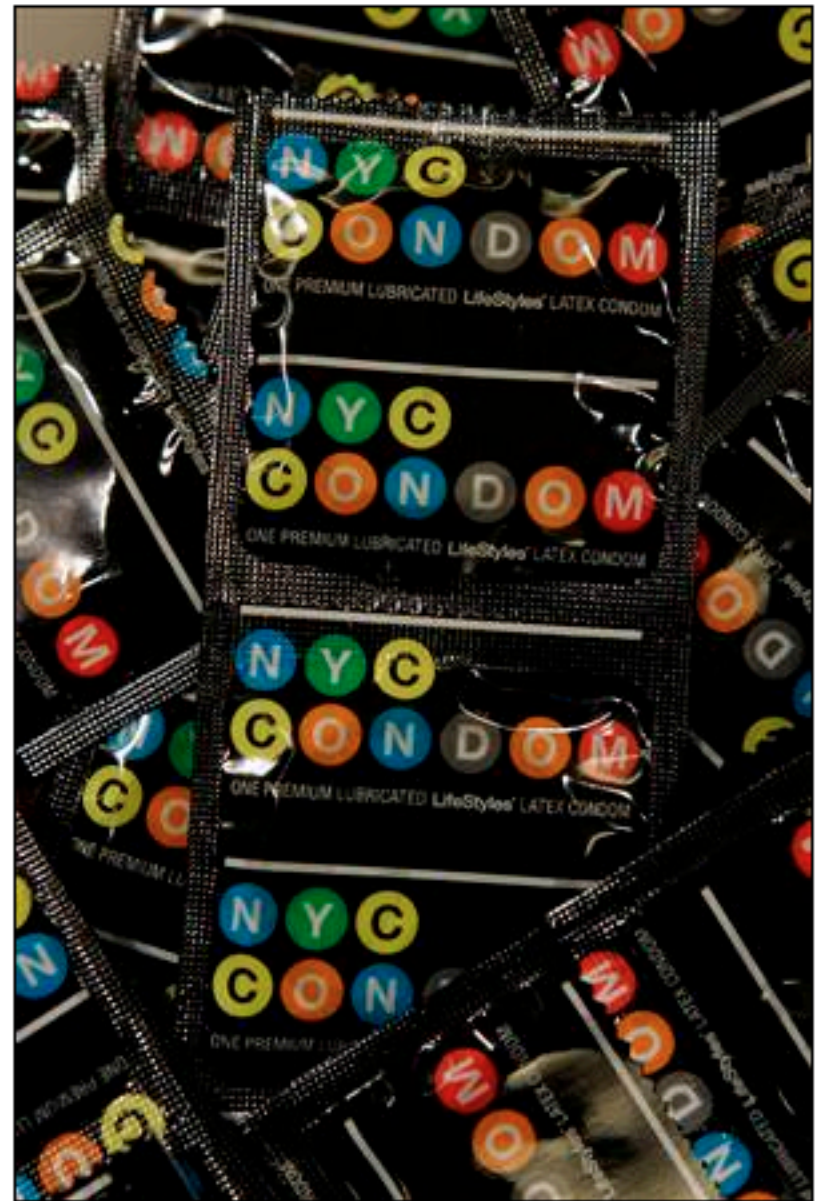
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In a Valentine's Day launch, New York unveiled its official condom in a subway-themed wrapper, with volunteers handing them out



Kathy Willens / AP

The nation's first city-themed condoms, unveiled on Valentine's Day, sport a subway motif.

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