

Molly Cranna

What the Condom Challenge Can Do to Your Body

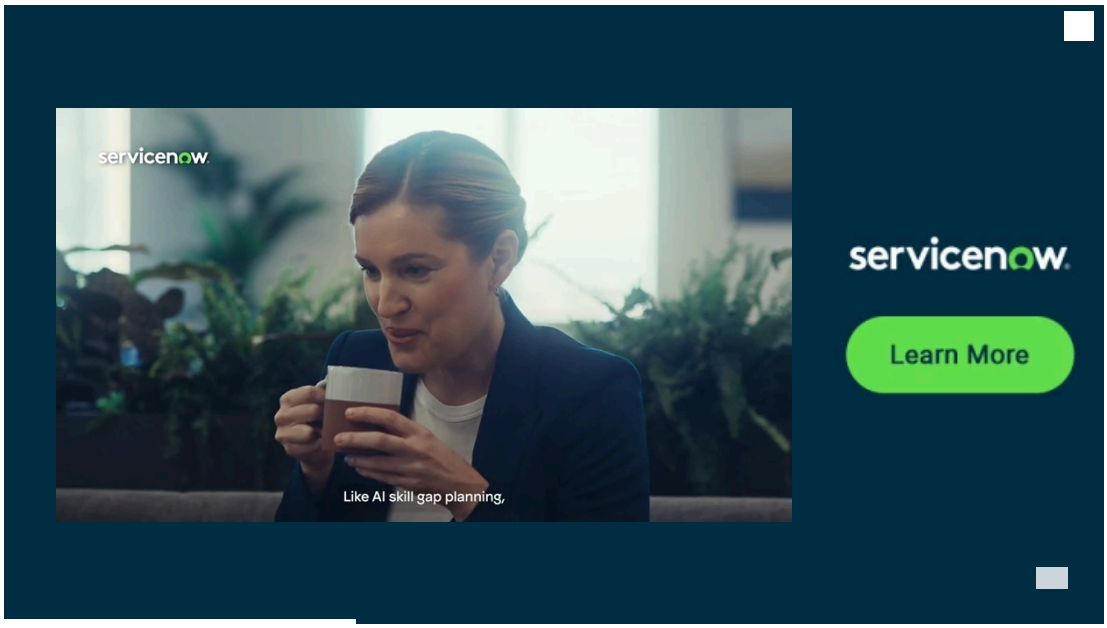
The "condom challenge" is not good for your health.

BY LINLEY SANDERS

April 3, 2018

While the Internet is abuzz with people freaking out over the so-called condom snorting challenge, there are serious health concerns for anyone who dares to try the social media "competition" that involves putting a condom up a nostril and pulling it out the throat.

ABC News reported the condom challenge first appeared in 2007 when a video of someone snorting an unwrapped condom up their nostril and trying to pull it back out of their mouth appeared on YouTube. It became popular again in 2013 when a YouTube influencer posted a video of the "challenge," and has now resurfaced as more people try it out. The videos don't make the "challenge" seem particularly pleasant to experience, but doctors say it's actually downright dangerous.



Dr. Wendie Williams, an emergency physician at The Colony ER Hospital in Texas, said the condom challenge — or any instance where people inhale objects up their nose — can tear sensitive membranes that can become infected. The condom could also slip into someone's esophagus in the middle of the challenge, causing a choking hazard.

about the risks. Ask yourself, is this worth seriously hurting myself or potentially dying over?"

The "natural route" for an object that is inhaled, like a condom, is to enter the lungs, says Dr. Darria Long Gillespie, an emergency department physician at Northside Hospital in Atlanta. If a condom goes toward someone's lungs, it could seal over their airway and likely suffocate them.

"Any person who does this is playing with chance," Gillespie tells *Teen Vogue*. "If just a piece of the condom breaks off, one could easily inhale it into their lungs — called aspirating — which could lead either to an infection like pneumonia or [a] severe inflammatory response."

In fact, that's happened before. According to *Forbes*, there was a case in 2004 in which a woman accidentally swallowed a condom during oral sex. The condom reportedly made its way to her lungs and blocked one of her airways, resulting in pneumonia and, ultimately, causing the upper right lobe of her lung to collapse.

Gillespie says doctors in the emergency room regularly deal with supposedly "harmless pranks" turning extremely dangerous.

"If you want YouTube fame, get it by doing something amazing, for which you're uniquely talented," Gillespie says. "Don't try to get it by potentially harming yourself or threatening your life, putting all that talent to waste."

Related: The Condom Challenge Is Not Safe



WATCH

Here Are The Best Signs From The March For Our Lives

KEYWORDS CONDOMS HEALTH CONDOM CHALLENGE DANGEROUS

Never Miss a Story.

Get the Teen Vogue Daily Newsletter: the top celeb, style, and culture news all in one place.

SIGN UP

By signing up, you agree to our user agreement (including class action waiver and arbitration provisions), and acknowledge our privacy policy.



HAIR

How to Shave Down There: A Guide to Shaving Pubic Hair on the Vagina

Dermatologists share a step-by-step guide and all the answers to your questions.

BY ALANNA MARTINE KILKEARY

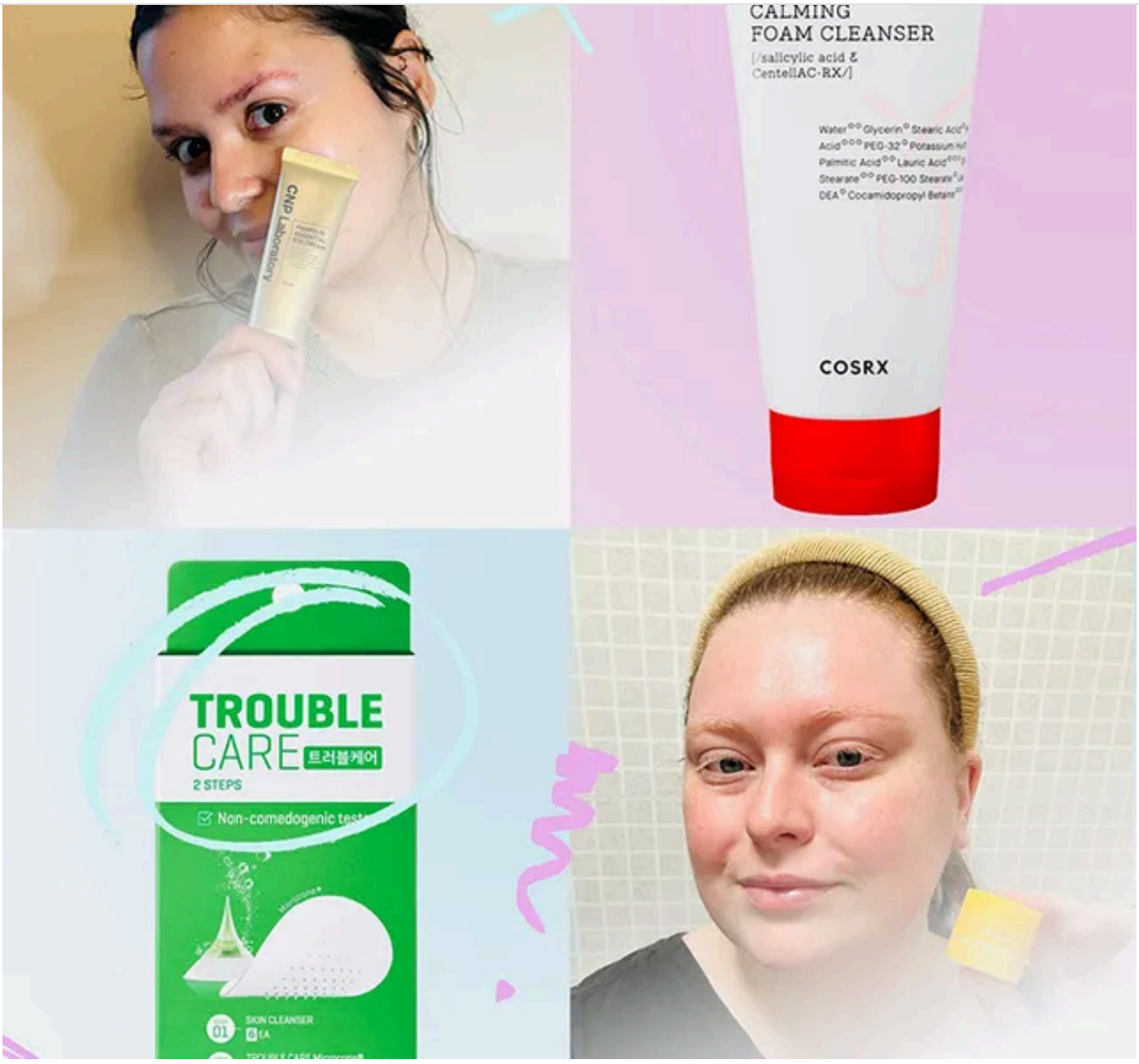


HEALTH

Your Cheeky Little Cigarette Is Still Dangerous, No Matter What Wellness Culture Says

No, Pilates and matcha doesn't cancel out a cigarette.

BY SITHARA RANASINGHE



BEAUTY

These Korean Skin Care Essentials Are on Sale Right Now

Picked by editors and dermatologists.

BY SARA DELGADO



BEAUTY

You Need a Sunscreen Combo You'll Reapply Just As Much As Your Lip Combo

Experts share their tips for selecting sunscreens to use throughout the day.

BY SARA DELGADO



STYLE

Why Does Lamine Yamal Wear Bandages During Matches?

The soccer star explained the reason ahead of Spain's first 2026 World Cup match.

BY SARA DELGADO



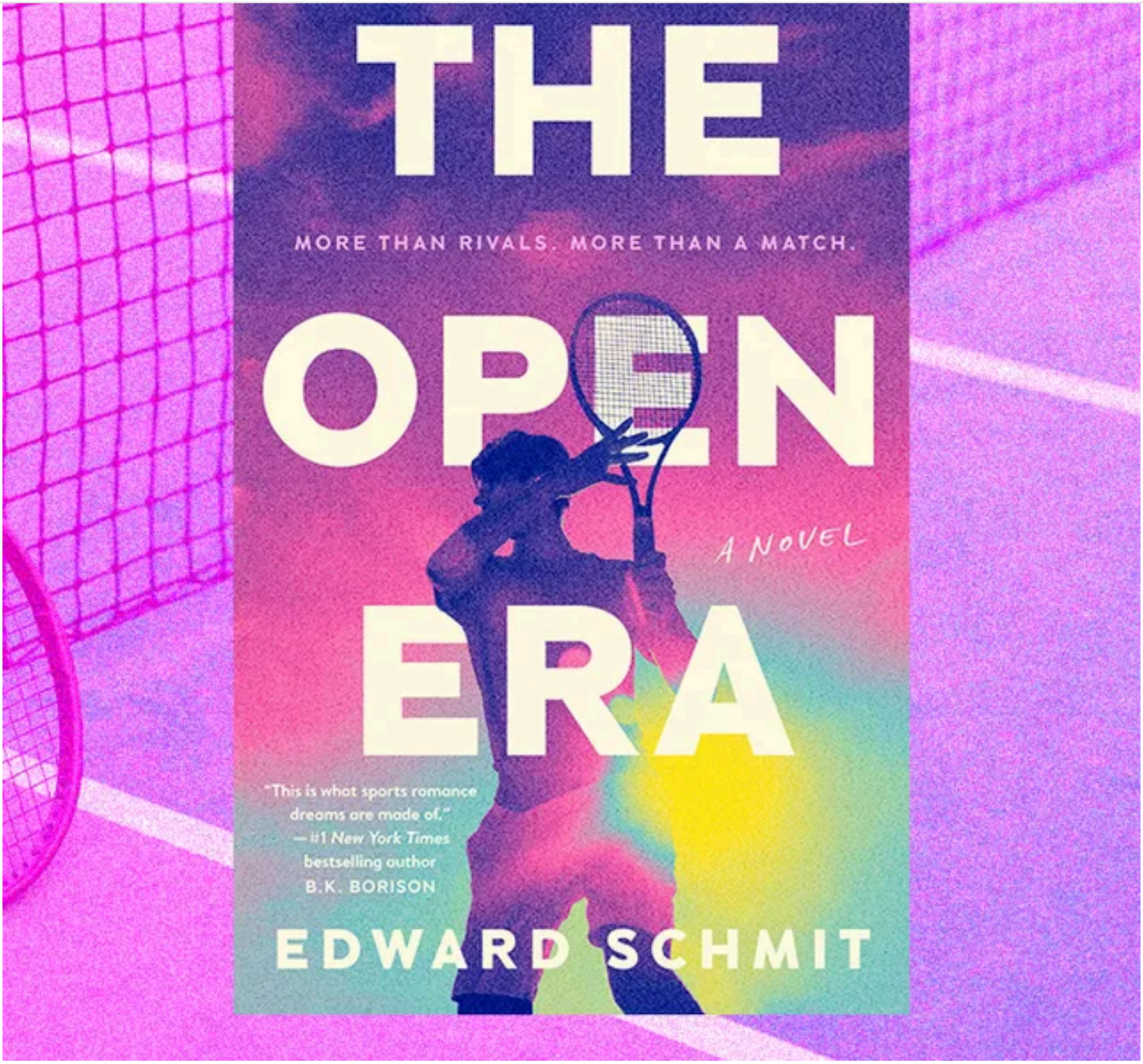


STYLE

How to Style Long Shorts For a Cute and Comfy Summer

Jorts, bloomers, and more.

BY DONYA MOMENIAN



BOOKS

New Gay Tennis Romance Novel 'The Open Era' Is About Being Out, Not Coming Out

Read an exclusive excerpt of Edward Schmit's new book.

BY K-CI WILLIAMS



IDENTITY

Why Are Thin Bodies the Default in Games?

Motion capture has the ability to capture fat bodies. So why don't we see more plus-size characters in games?

BY NICOLE CARPENTER



STYLE

North West Proves Triangle of Death Piercings Are the Trendiest

And that winged eyeliner isn't just for millennials.

BY DONYA MOMENIAN



SPIRITUALITY

Weekly Horoscope June 1–7: Mercury in Cancer Is All About Instinct

This celestial aspect inspires us to look back in order to take bold leaps forward.

BY LISA STARDUST



CULTURE

Becka Is Going Through It, but Mattea Conforti Is Going to the Jersey Shore

We caught up with 'The Testaments' star ahead of her summer break, before she returns to Harvard.

BY KARA NESVIG



CELEBRITY STYLE

Olivia Rodrigo Doubles Down on Punk Style With Sex Pistols Merch

The mini skirt and graphic tee combo never fails.

BY KARA NESVIG