

Final Tips

- Keep scheduled appointments with your healthcare provider so that he or she can follow-up on your overall health and check on your progress with the dilators. You may find it helpful to bring your dilators with you to your healthcare appointments to discuss your progress.
- If you have physical restrictions that make it difficult for you to follow your healthcare provider's suggestions for dilator use, ask how the dilator instructions can be modified to fit your abilities.
- Listen to your body. Although it is common to experience some degree of genital discomfort or pain during dilator use, if something does not feel right to you, stop dilator use and contact your healthcare provider for additional information.

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The logo for Pure Romance, featuring the word "PURE" in a small, sans-serif font above the word "Romance" in a large, elegant, cursive script. A small heart icon is positioned above the letter "o" in "Romance".

Dilator Guide

Women choose to use vaginal dilators for a variety of reasons. Certain medical conditions, treatments and surgeries can result in a narrowing of the vagina, a decrease in elasticity of the vagina, muscle spasms around the vagina, or genital pain (particularly during intercourse or gynecological exams). Even when the cause of vaginal pain or discomfort is unclear, a healthcare provider (e.g., doctor, nurse or therapist) may still recommend the use of vaginal dilators.

Vaginal dilators can play an important role in a larger treatment plan recommended by one's healthcare provider. Some women use vaginal dilators in order to gently stretch the vagina over time and make sexual intercourse more comfortable. Other times, healthcare providers ask women to use vaginal dilators so that they can better see and examine the vagina and cervix as part of on-going medical care.

Pure Romance dilators are silicone products. If you are allergic or hypersensitive to silicone products, please do not use these dilators and instead ask your healthcare provider about alternative options.

This brochure is intended as general information about the use of vaginal dilators. It is not a recommendation for treatment nor should it be considered medical advice. Women's healthcare needs are highly individual. We recommend that you ask your healthcare provider how you can use vaginal dilators safely and effectively. Please consult with your healthcare provider if you have any questions.

What should I know before I begin?

Ask your healthcare provider for information about vaginal dilators before beginning to use them. It may feel uncomfortable to ask these questions, but it is important to understand how to use dilators correctly for your personal health needs.

Using vaginal dilators means putting an object inside a private and intimate part of your body. Some women may feel hesitant to do this, particularly if they were raised to never look at or touch their genitals, if they have never experienced vaginal penetration (or haven't in a long time) or if they have had intrusive or uncomfortable medical examinations or treatments. Other women find that they enjoy the use of vaginal dilators, or else they feel neutral about it. Give yourself permission to experience your feelings for whatever they are. If you want support or guidance, consider meeting with a certified sex therapist (locate one through www.aasect.org) or ask your healthcare provider to refer you to a therapist.

Using a dilator is not the same as masturbation. The purpose of vaginal dilators is to gently stretch your vagina. The purpose of masturbation is sexual pleasure. Sometimes women find it pleasurable to use dilators and may incorporate them as part of masturbation. Other times women view dilators for treatment purposes only and they seek sexual pleasure in other ways. Women can use a vaginal dilator as part of their healthcare treatment plan even if they do not feel comfortable masturbating.

How do dilators work?

Vaginal dilators work by gently and gradually stretching the vagina over time. By beginning with smaller sized dilators and eventually progressing to larger sizes, many women are able to carefully stretch the vagina so that eventually they can more comfortably use tampons, have gynecological exams or experience sexual intercourse or other types of sexual play.

How often should I use a dilator?

Recommended frequency varies by women's individual health needs. Ask your healthcare provider how often he or she recommends that you use vaginal dilators and for what length of time. Sometimes women use vaginal dilators once a week or less often; other healthcare providers suggest using dilators three or more times per week, or even daily. Sometimes women are asked to use dilators over a period of weeks or months; other times it is necessary to use dilators with some regularity for the rest of one's life.

How should I use my dilator?

Find a place that feels private and comfortable so that you can relax and use your dilator. Some women find that the bath or shower works well; others prefer their bedroom or another private space. Some women use their dilator alone whereas others feel more comfortable involving their partner, or asking their healthcare provider to help them insert the dilator at first. Dilators may be easier to use if you are relaxed. You might find it helpful

to take a warm shower or bath prior to use or listen to relaxing music. You will want to choose a comfortable position. Many women lie down on their back with knees slightly apart and bent (similar to the position for pelvic exams). Some women do this while in bed or while relaxing on a sofa. Others stand with a leg raised on the side of the bed or bath tub.

Because women have different needs, Pure Romance dilators are available in a variety of sizes. Healthcare providers typically recommend beginning with the smallest size dilator available even if you think that you can use a larger size. With time (days, weeks or months), women typically progress to larger size dilators at the suggestion of their healthcare provider and when they are very comfortable inserting the smaller sizes. Before use, check your dilators for damage. If your dilator is cracked or damaged in any way, do not use it.

Before inserting the dilator into your vagina, apply a small amount of water-based lubricant on the dilator and around your vaginal entrance. Pure Romance offers two water-based lubricants: Just Like Me and Sweet Seduction. Holding on to the base of the dilator, insert it gently but firmly into the vagina. Use a mirror if that is helpful. Some healthcare providers recommend inserting it as deeply as is comfortable, but without forcing it. Once the dilator is inside the vagina, it may be left in place, moved gently forward and backward, left to right, or rotated clockwise or counterclockwise.

How long should I use my dilator?

Healthcare providers may recommend 5-10 minutes of use or longer lengths of time (15-20 minutes) depending on individual health needs and personal goals. Some healthcare providers ask women to perform pelvic floor exercises while using dilators. Ask your healthcare provider what is recommended for you. Some women use this time to read a book, catch up on emails, talk on the telephone, kiss or otherwise be sexual with a partner, watch television or simply take time to relax and be quiet. If the dilator slips out, gently push it back into your vagina.

How should I remove my dilator?

Slowly rotate it clockwise or counterclockwise while gently removing it from your vagina. You may want to use a tissue or soft towel to gently wipe away excess lubricant from your genitals.

How should I clean my dilator?

Pure Romance dilators are silicone products. Items made from silicone typically have a non-porous surface intended for easy and thorough cleaning. It is important to clean your dilators before and after each use with warm water and a gentle cleanser, such as Pure Romance's Come Clean that is specially designed to clean products such as your dilators. Simply run your dilator under warm water and then generously spray with Come Clean. Rinse the dilator under warm water and pat dry with a clean towel. Store the dilator in a plastic bag or an air-tight container in a cool, dry environment.

Can I use a vibrator too?

Some women enjoy using a vibrator on their clitoris while using a dilator inside their vagina. In addition, some women alternate using an insertable vibrator with their vaginal dilator.

When can I attempt intercourse?

It will depend on your personal health and comfort. Sometimes dilators are used in conjunction with sexual intercourse; other times women use dilators for some time before attempting intercourse.

What else can I expect?

It is not uncommon to experience genital discomfort or pain while using vaginal dilators. Some women notice light vaginal bleeding or spotting associated with dilator use. Ask your healthcare provider what symptoms you might experience and when you should make follow-up appointments. If you have any questions about your personal health or the use of vaginal dilators, contact your healthcare provider.