

Vaginal Dilator Instructions for Gynecology Patients

A vaginal dilator is a tube-shaped medical device used to help restore the elasticity of the vagina. Menopause, pelvic surgery, and radiation to the pelvic area can cause your vagina to become drier, less elastic, shorter and narrower. Using a vaginal dilator or staying sexually active can help lessen these side effects and decrease discomfort during pelvic exams and sexual intercourse. Vaginal dilators can be purchased as a single device or in a kit of gradually increasing sizes. Your doctor will advise you on what size dilator is best for you and give you recommendations on how long you should continue vaginal dilator therapy. If you have difficulty with vaginal dilator therapy, please notify your doctor.

Once your doctor has advised you to begin vaginal dilator therapy, follow these instructions at home:

1. Begin using your dilator 3-4 times per week, for 10-15 minutes a day.
2. Use a water-soluble lubricant, such as K-Y Jelly[®], on your dilator and vagina before insertion. Avoid silicone-based lubricants.
3. Find a place where you feel relaxed and comfortable, take a few deep breaths, relaxing your body and your pelvic floor muscles before beginning.
4. Lie on your back with your knees apart and insert the rounded end of the dilator into your vagina as far as it will go without causing pain (see Figure 1). If you are unable to insert it all the way into your vagina, do not worry, it will become easier over time with continued therapy.
5. Keep the dilator inserted for 10-15 minutes. If comfortable, slowly rotate the dilator.
6. Wash the dilator with soap and water before and after each use.
7. If you are using a kit with multiple size dilators, once you are able to insert one size of a dilator completely into your vagina with no discomfort, you are ready to begin using the next size up.

Resources

MD Anderson Cancer Center
Radiation Therapy Website
<http://www.mdanderson.org>

National Cancer Institute (NCI)
Radiation Treatment Center Website
<http://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/treatment>
radiation therapy

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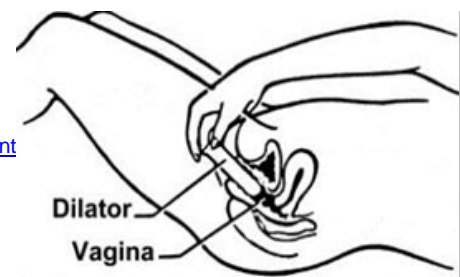


Figure 1 Insertion of Dilator