

Vaginal Dilator Instructions

Vaginal Dilator

As part of your ongoing follow-up care, your doctors will need to do pelvic exams on a regular basis.

Internal and external radiation can cause scar tissue to form in your vaginal tissue. Your doctor may have more difficulty during an exam and you may be more uncomfortable if you develop scar tissue in your vagina.

A vaginal dilator can reduce scar tissue formation in your vagina, decreasing discomfort during pelvic exams as well as during intercourse. A dilator will keep the vaginal tissue stretched and prevent the build-up of scar tissue.

When to Start the Procedure

Start using the dilator

To help you remember when to use the dilator, you may wish to pick certain days of the week and follow a routine for using the dilator. You may substitute sexual intercourse for the dilator.

How to Use the Vaginal Dilator

- Get into a comfortable position (such as lying on your back in bed, relaxing in a tub or sitting on the toilet). You may try standing with one leg raised slightly higher than the other.

- Generously apply a vaginal lubricant (such as K-Y Jelly[®], Replens[®] or Astroglide[®]) to the tip of the dilator and on the opening of your vagina. (The lubricant will melt when it reaches body temperature.)
- Gently insert the dilator into your vagina. While rotating it, gradually advance and partially remove the dilator. Repeat this to lubricate the inside of your vagina until the dilator meets with resistance at the top of the vagina. This should not cause any discomfort.
- After meeting with resistance, hold a steady pressure on the end of the dilator for about 10 minutes.
- Remove the dilator and wash it with soap and water. Dry it with a towel. Store the dilator wherever it will be handy.
- Use the dilator or have sexual intercourse three times a week. It is important that it is spaced every 2 to 3 days.

What to Expect After Radiation Treatments

- Expect dryness of your vaginal area after radiation. You can use an over-the-counter water-based vaginal lubricant (such as K-Y Jelly[®], Replens[®] or Astroglide[®]) to add moisture to the area.

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When To Call Your GYN Oncologist or Radiation Oncologist

Call if you:

- have problems with the dilation process
- have more than slight bleeding or spotting after using the dilator
- have severe pain when using the dilator
- develop signs of infection:
 - vaginal itching
 - vaginal discharge (with or without strong odor)
 - fever
 - pain in your abdomen.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call one of the radiation oncology nurses Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., at 612-863-4060.

After hours, you may leave a message or you will be given instructions if you need to speak with a radiation oncologist.