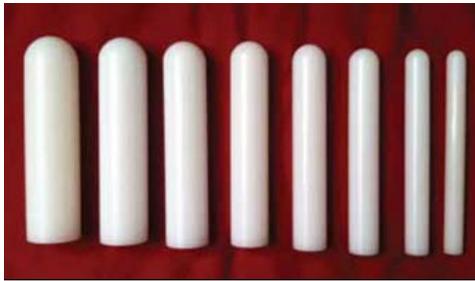




Vaginal Dilation

What is a vaginal dilator?

Vaginal dilators are smooth tube-shaped devices that are made of plastic, silicone or glass used to develop or restore the vaginal opening and depth. They come in a variety of graduated widths and lengths ranging from small to large.



What is the purpose of a vaginal dilator?

Vaginal dilators can be used to create a new vaginal space or to slowly stretch the vaginal tissue and expand its width, depth and elasticity. After vaginal reconstructive surgery, they can also be used to maintain vaginal patency.

The goal of treatment is to start with the small dilators and gradually increase the size of the dilator.

Several medical conditions can warrant the use of vaginal dilators, examples include:

- Vaginal agenesis or stenosis
- Pelvic floor dysfunction
- Vaginismus
- Vaginal atrophy
- Vaginal graft versus host disease
- Post-radiation vaginal adhesions
- Postoperatively after vaginal reconstruction surgery
- Other genital pain conditions

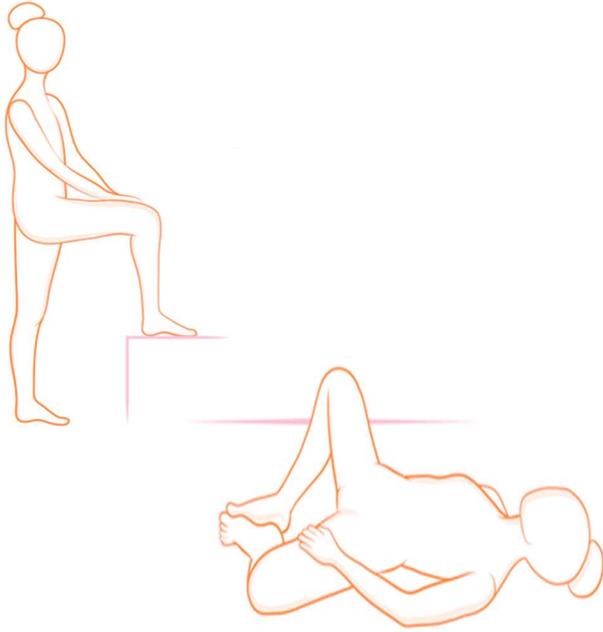
How do I use vaginal dilators?

Prior to initiating dilator therapy, you will be instructed on proper placement by your medical team, and your progress will be monitored over time. Vaginal dilation should be performed while sitting or lying in a comfortable position. Relaxation techniques such as playing music or taking a warm bath are important for achieving success.

- Lie down on your back with your feet together and your knees bent
- Relax your legs out to the side and feel the opening of the vagina with your hand
- Apply lubrication to the vaginal opening to help decrease friction (i.e. KY Jelly, coconut oil)
- Apply firm pressure with the dilator in the vaginal area; you should feel a stretching sensation
- Stay in that position for 10 to 30 minutes
- Take small 5 minute breaks if needed and resume
- These exercises should be done once or twice daily starting with the smallest dilator in the kit and progressively increasing the size of the dilator over a period of time as you feel more comfortable
- After use, wash your dilators with soap and lukewarm water and dry the dilator thoroughly

If you are having pain, urinary symptoms, or bleeding with dilation exercise, you should call your provider for guidance.

Here are possible positions for dilating:



How long does it take to achieve results?

Progress with vaginal dilation varies depending on the severity of the condition and frequency of vaginal dilation exercises; some people will advance quickly and some will use small dilators for a longer period of time.

When will I know when to advance to the next size?

When you can comfortably insert a dilator all the way inside the vagina without a stretching sensation or discomfort, you are ready to move on to the next dilator size in the kit.

At your follow up appointments, your provider can help assess your progress. If you are ready for sexual activity, your provider can discuss this next step with you.

How can I learn more?

Pediatric and Adolescent Gynecologists at Texas Children's Hospital have developed a demonstration video illustrating how to use vaginal dilators.

Watch the video here: <http://youtu.be/LoJcT8tYhZg>

This is the angle for dilator placement:

