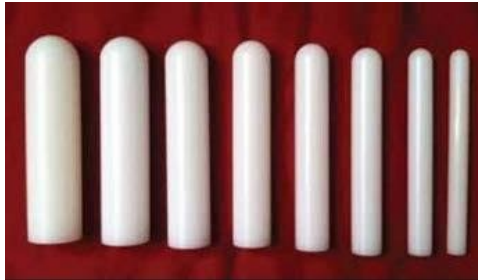




Vaginal Dilation

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 as directed by your healthcare provider.

Vaginal dilators may be used with the following medical issues:

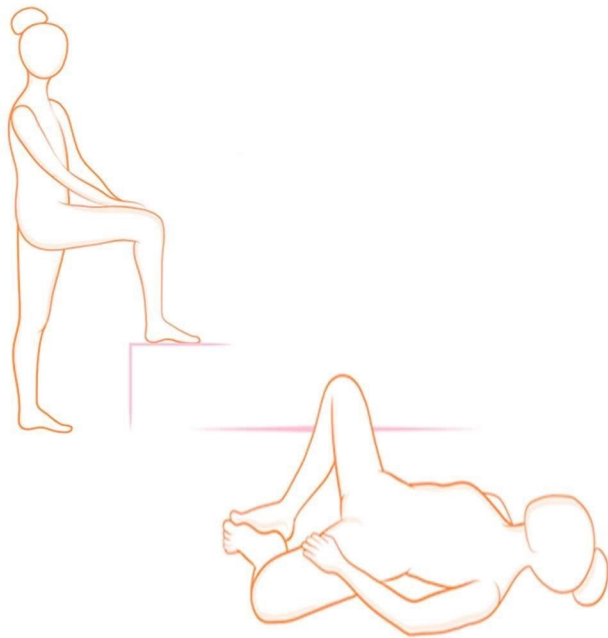
- Vaginal agenesis or stenosis
- Pelvic floor dysfunction
- Vaginismus
- Vaginal atrophy
- Vaginal graft versus host disease
- Post-radiation vaginal adhesions
- Postoperatively after vaginal reconstruction surgery
- Other genital pain conditions

How do I use vaginal dilators?

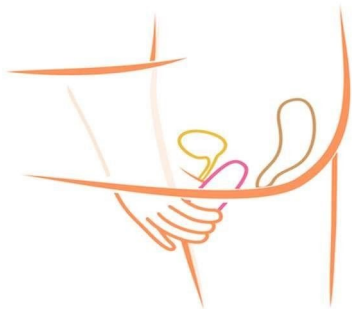
Prior to initiating dilator therapy, you will be instructed on proper placement by your medical team, and your progress will be monitored over time. Vaginal dilation should be performed while sitting or lying in a comfortable position. Relaxation techniques such as playing music or taking a warm bath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

- Wash your hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds
- 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. water-based lubricating jelly like KY Jelly)
- Apply gentle, but firm pressure with the dilator in the vaginal area; you should feel a stretching sensation of your skin around the dilator
- Stay in that position for 10 to 30 minutes
- 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 recommended by your healthcare provider and as you feel more comfortable
- After use, wash your dilators with soap and warm water and dry the dilator thoroughly
- If you are having pain, problems urinating, or bleeding with dilation exercises, you should call your healthcare provider for guidance.

Here are possible positions for dilating:



This is the angle for dilator placement:



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.

How 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.

What size should my vagina be?

Every vagina is a different size and there is no “goal” size to reach. Most dilator sets come with a range of sizes, and often the largest size(s) of dilators are not needed before starting to engage in vaginal sexual activity with your partner. Your healthcare provider can help you assess your dilation progress.

At your follow up appointments, your provider can help assess your progress. Bring your dilators with you to your appointments. 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>