

Mass General Cancer Center Sexual Health Clinic

Using a Vaginal Dilator

A vaginal dilator is a tube-shaped device that is inserted into the vagina. It is used to gently stretch your vagina over time and help keep the vagina open. This is important because it will allow your doctor to do pelvic exams. It is also important if you wish to be sexually active. Using a dilator is not the same as masturbation.

How do I use a vaginal dilator?

- Find a place where you will be comfortable and able to relax. A bath or shower works well, but some women prefer their bedroom.
- Choose a comfortable position. Try lying on your back with knees slightly apart and bent. Or try standing with a leg raised on the side of the bed, or bathtub.
- Before inserting the vaginal dilator, apply a small amount of water-based lubricant on the dilator and around the opening of the vagina.
- Gently insert the dilator only as far as it is comfortable. Do not force it. Use a mirror if it is helpful. Gently move it forward and backward.
- Use your dilator for at least one minute.
- To remove your dilator, rotate it clockwise or counterclockwise, while gently removing it.

How often should I use a vaginal dilator?

Use your vaginal dilator at least three times per week for at least one minute to start. Then, you can work up to using it from 3–10 minutes or as instructed by your health care provider.

How do I clean and store it?

Your dilator is made of silicone. There are many cleaners that cannot be used with silicone. Use warm water and a gentle, fragrance-free cleaner, such as dish washing liquid or hand washing soap. Rinse and gently pat it dry with a paper towel.

Store your dilator in a plastic bag in a cool, dry environment such as a drawer or closet.