



NORTHWEST
— WELLNESS —

How to Choose a

Vaginal Lubricant

Why would you need one?

Have you noticed any vaginal dryness, burning, itching or pain during or after sexual activities or even just going about your day? Your vagina might need lubricant if you:

- are pregnant or breastfeeding
- are going through menopause
- have hormone imbalances
- take certain medications
- are extra stressed
- have certain health conditions



There are so many! Which one is right for me?

Every body is different. You might need to try a few to find the right one for you. Sometimes your pelvic PT or physician might have some samples! Here are some tips to help you choose:

Choosing a Type of Lubricant:

- Water-based may help moisturize the vagina. But they are not very slippery and can dry out faster during sexual activities, requiring you to reapply more often.
- Silicone are very slippery, but do not help moisturize and might be sticky when they dry.
- Hybrid (Water + Silicone) may help both moisturize and create a slippery feeling
- Oil-based (coconut or vegetable oil, petroleum, baby oil, beeswax, etc) may be a more natural and readily available option for both moisture and slippery benefits

What to Avoid in Lubricants:

- Labels like “warming”, “cooling”, “numbing” or “tingling” if you tend to have sensitive skin. These products can contain Menthol, Lidocaine or Capsaicin that can be irritating.
- If you get bladder or yeast infections easily, avoid household oils, butters or waxes (coconut or vegetable oil, petroleum, baby oil, beeswax, etc) since they can trap bacteria in the vagina.
- **Ingredients most likely to irritate the vagina: Polyquaternium (7,10,15), Non-oxynol 9, Chlorhexidine, Propylene Glycol, Glycerin, Glycerol**

Using a Dilator, Vaginal Massage Wand or Sex Toy?

- Silicone lubricants may damage silicone products. Read the instructions for your health product/toy to see what lubricants they recommend, or ask your healthcare provider.

Using Condoms?

- Some lubricants may not be safe with condoms. Read the warnings on the lubricant and condom packaging to make sure.
- In general, oil based lubricants are not recommended for use with condoms.

Trying to get Pregnant?

- Avoid lubricants with spermicides
- Look for a lubricant that says “vaginal pH matched”. Avoid “pH buffered” or “pH neutral”
- Some products claim to increase your chances of getting pregnant. They may be less harmful to sperm than traditional lubricants, but they do not improve fertility.
- Pre-Seed lubricant is one “fertility-friendly” brand that is least likely to harm sperm

Other tips to help vaginal irritation or dryness:

- Wash your hands before and after sex, and urinate after sex to help prevent infections.
- Avoid using expired lubricants, and do not use an opened bottle for more than 1 year.
- Wash all sex toys or dilators prior to and after use with soap, and rinse thoroughly with warm water.
- Avoid douches or personal hygiene products around or inside the vagina. Think of your vagina as a self-cleaning oven that can take care of itself. All you need is water and maybe some scent-free soap to wash the outside!

