

Vaginal Dilation After Vaginoplasty

How to do vaginal dilation at home

Vaginal dilation is an important part of recovery after vaginoplasty surgery. This handout provides step-by-step instructions for doing vaginal dilations at home.

What is vaginal dilation?

Vaginal dilation is using a tool called a *vaginal dilator* to gently stretch the vagina. You will need to do dilations regularly to keep the vagina walls open as they heal. You will begin vaginal dilations before you leave the hospital.

Before discharge, your surgical team will do a physical inspection of your vagina. They will remove the vaginal packing and observe the level of tissue healing. They will determine the appropriate dilator size and will let you know when to begin dilation. You will receive a vaginal dilator while you are in the hospital, or you may be asked to purchase one before surgery.



Vaginal dilators

How will I do my vaginal dilations?

Dilation should be done 2 times per day. The recommended times are early morning and right before bedtime. This will allow you to do normal daily activities without having to find time and space for dilation.

1. Get your supplies: dilator, lubricant, handheld mirror, and small towel. Note: The handheld mirror may help you get familiar with your reconstructed anatomy. Using the mirror can help you connect what you feel with what you are seeing.
2. Wash your hands.
3. Lie down on a flat, comfortable surface. Place the towel underneath your hips. Bend your knees and spread your legs. You may want to put pillows under your knees for comfort.
4. Generously apply lubricant to the dilator.
5. Gently insert the dilator into your vagina until you feel resistance.

6. Once you feel this resistance, apply a little more pressure. You should not feel pain or discomfort, only pressure. If you feel pain or discomfort, back off a little on the pressure.
7. Maintain the pressure for 10-15 minutes. Then remove the dilator.
8. Wash the dilator with mild soap and water. Dry the dilator and place it in a plastic zip-top bag until the next use.
9. Wash your hands.

For how long will I need to do vaginal dilations?

You will need to do vaginal dilation indefinitely unless you have a consistent partner for vaginal intercourse. The vagina will *atrophy* (waste away) or *stenose* (reduce in size) if it is not dilated regularly.

When should I call my doctor?

You should call your doctor if you have any of the following:

- Increased swelling or bruising.
- Increased redness along the incision.
- More difficulty in your dilations or are unable to dilate.
- If you notice a wound opening along the incisions.
- If you notice new discharge or bleeding after dilation.
- If you have severe or increased pain not relieved by medication.
- If you have any side effects to medications such as rash, nausea, headache, or vomiting.
- If you have an oral temperature over 100.4 degrees.
- If you have any yellowish or greenish drainage from the incisions or notice a foul odor.
- If you have bleeding from the incisions that is difficult to control with light pressure.
- If you have loss of feeling or motion.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

Provider name:

Clinic phone number:
