



# Vaginal Dryness

## Moisturizers

Vaginal moisturizers help keep moisture in the vaginal lining and acidify the vagina. They also help relieve soreness, itching, burning and other discomforts caused by dryness. They are available without a prescription. Most come in the form of a gel, liquid or capsule, which is inserted into the vagina.

## How To Use

Vaginal moisturizers are most effective if used regularly. Start by applying every three days (or as directed). Then apply more or less frequently to manage your symptoms. Follow the package instructions for application. Expect some vaginal discharge while using the moisturizer. The discharge should decrease within a week or two. It may be helpful to apply just before bedtime to reduce this.

## Examples of Vaginal Moisturizers

- Hyalo Gyn
- Oasis Silk
- Luvena
- Coconut Oil\*
- Replens
- Femani Smooth\*
- K-Y Liquid beads

Many women have external dryness or irritation. Moisturizers can also be used to the external vaginal area.

## Lubricants

Vaginal lubricants can make sexual activity easier and more comfortable. Unlike moisturizers, they are only used as needed during sex. Lubricants have a very slippery texture. Many are designed to feel like a woman's natural moisture. Most women who use a vaginal moisturizer will still need a lubricant to make sex more comfortable.

## How to Use

**For sexual activity with vaginal penetration:** make sure to cover the inner labia, vaginal entrance, clitoral area, and your partner's penis, fingers and sex toy with a silicone-based lubricant.

**For sexual activity without penetration:** Cover the inner labia, clitoral area and any parts that feel dry or "tugs" during sex with either a water-based or silicone-based lubricant. Lubricants can be water-based, silicone-based or oil-based.

## Examples of water-based lubricants

- Slippery Stuff
- Good Clean Love (aloe vera based)
- K-Y Liquid

Since water evaporates, these lubricants may need to be reapplied during sexual activity. They can also be "reactivated" with a small amount of water. Many of these contain glycerin, which can make the product last longer (though can be irritating to women with sensitive skin). Water-based lubricants are the best choice for use with silicone dilators or sex toys.

## Examples of Silicone -based lubricants

- Pink Indulgence
- Femani Smooth and Oasis Silk
- K-Y Liquid Beads
- UberLube

Silicone-based lubricants (look for dimethicone or cyclomethicone in the ingredient list) last longer than water-based and oil-based lubricants and provide better lubrication. However, they tend to be more expensive, and do not wash away as easily as water-based lubricants. These lubricants can be used underwater. Avoid using them in the shower as they are extremely slippery and can cause falls.

Silicone-based lubricants are safe to use with latex condoms; however, do not use silicone-based lubricants with dilators or sex toys made from silicone. They can damage the material over time.

An example of an oil-based lubricant is coconut oil. Please note that oil-based lubricants will destroy latex condoms. In addition, coconut oil should be used in mild cases of vaginal dryness only and may not provide enough lubrication for some women. It also has the potential to be comedogenic (i.e. it can clog skin pores).

When choosing a lubricant, be aware of glycerin, parabens, perfumes, and flavoring agent ingredients. Not all women will react the same way to any given ingredient; however, certain ingredients can cause side effects. Before using a new lubricant, test a small amount on your inner thigh to see how your body responds.

## Glycerin

Glycerin is sometimes added to water-based lubricants to make them last longer; however, it may be irritating to women with very sensitive skin. It may also increase your risk of yeast infections if you are already prone to them.

## Parabens

Parabens (e.g., methylparaben, butylparaben) are preservatives used in many cosmetics and personal care products. They may be irritating if you have very sensitive skin.

## Perfumes and flavoring agents :

Perfumes are not recommended for sensitive skin. They may cause irritation. Flavored lubricants, which are used for oral stimulation, should be okay. However, they should be tested on your inner thigh first.