

VAGINAL DRYNESS

Vaginal dryness, pelvic pain, and pain during intercourse are common symptoms of endocrine therapy and menopause. Here are some general suggestions, but please talk to your provider if you have any questions.

- **Vaginal Moisteners** are applied with a slim applicator, vaginal suppository, or your fingers two or more times a week prior to bedtime. Examples include coconut oil, vitamin E, Replens, Luvena, Hyalo Gyn, Desert Harvest Aloe Glide, Revaree, Vmagic, or Good Clean Love Restore.
- **Vaginal Lubricants** are applied immediately before sexual activity outside the vagina. Water and silicone-based lubricants without perfumes are best. Examples include Astroglide, Liquid Silk, Slippery Stuff, Pink, Uberlube, and Good Clean Love.

OTHER TIPS TO IMPROVE VAGINAL HEALTH:

- **Avoid using products that could be irritating or promote dryness**, such as bubble bath, lotions, deodorants, perfumes, harsh or deodorant soaps, or douches in the vaginal area.
- **If you experience pain with insertion**, apply topical aqueous-based lidocaine to the vaginal vestibule three minutes prior to intercourse.
- **Regular sexual activity or stimulation** helps to increase circulation to the vagina, promoting healthy tissues.
- **Pelvic floor muscle training and Kegel exercises** help to strengthen vaginal walls, promote elasticity, and improve bladder leakage. Pelvic floor muscles need to be able to contract and relax in order to function properly. Some people need to increase pelvic floor muscle strength, while others need to increase muscle length and relaxation. We recommend seeing a pelvic health physical therapist to help you identify exercises and strategies that will benefit you. We will be glad to provide this referral.
- **Regular use of silicone vaginal dilators and/or a pelvic wand.** Vaginal dilators are a necessary part of therapy for patients undergoing pelvic radiation therapy. They can also be helpful for symptoms of pelvic pain, and for pain during intercourse. There are many types, sizes, and materials available. A pelvic health physical therapist can instruct you in which one to purchase, proper use, and progression.

SEXUAL HEALTH REFERENCES FOR WOMEN AFTER BREAST CANCER THERAPY

BOOKS:

- *100 Questions and Answers About Breast Cancer Sensuality, Sexuality and Intimacy* by Michael L. Krychman, Sandra Finestone and Susan Kellogg
- *Woman Cancer Sex* by Anne Katz

WEBSITES:

- Life After Cancer Treatment: [Cancer.gov/CancerTopics/Coping/Life-After-Treatment](https://www.cancer.gov/cancer-topics/coping/life-after-treatment)
- All About Sexual Health: [Livestrong.com/Sexual-Health](https://www.livestrong.com/sexual-health)
- North American Menopause Society: [Menopause.org](https://www.menopause.org)
- American Congress of Obstetricians & Gynecologists: [ACOG.org/Patients](https://www.acog.org/patients)