

General information about vibrators/center for sexual health

There are many questions about vibrators. Vibrators are sex aids, sometimes called sex toys, that are used quite commonly. They do not substitute for interpersonal interaction nor do they make a person 'vibrator dependent' as is sometimes implied in sitcoms or movies.

Vibrators provide more intense stimulation to nerve endings and some people find this arousing or pleasurable. We recommend four companies for vibrator purchase.

1. Vibrators may be purchased locally from Danmar Products, Inc.
221 Jackson Industrial Dr.
Ann Arbor, MI 48103
Phone: 734.761.1990.

You can view their products online at www.danmarproducts.com.
If you wish to mail order from them, call Carrie Burzan at 800.783.1998

2. If you are interested in purchasing vibrators online, two reputable sites that will not 'cookie' your computer, give you 'popups' or sell your name to mailing lists are:
www.babeland.com
www.goodvibes.com
www.drugstore.com

These companies have been in the business of selling sex aids including sex toys for a long time. Some of these companies also have toll-free numbers if you prefer to speak to someone and not order 'over the internet.'

Vibrators and other sex toys from these companies arrive in 'plain brown wrappers' and return address information is neutral.

If you are purchasing a vibrator for the first time, there are so many to choose from that it can seem overwhelming. Sex therapists recommend that you consider what is comfortable for you and that you follow some general guidelines:

1. Battery operated vibrators are easier to use. Try to find vibrators that use standard types of batteries, not 'unusual' batteries. Many vibrators are operated with AA batteries, or watch batteries.
2. Waterproof. Try to look for vibrators that are not only washable (which they all should be) but also waterproof.
3. Price. Vibrators can range from cheap to pricey. In general, remember that these are electronic gadgets. Some may last five years, some may last 5 weeks. Try to stay on the moderate side pricewise.
4. Type. Many people use vibrators when masturbating and in partner activity. Vibrators can be tiny—a popular vibrator is oval or bullet shaped—and used for 'all over body sensation.' Some vibrators are conical or 'penis shaped.' These are often used to insert into the vagina. Some vibrators are smaller and conical and

- these may be used for anal stimulation. Make sure that you don't 'share' vibrators with a partner or move a vibrator from the anus to the vagina. The anus has bacteria that would hurt the vagina. Some people settle for a two vibrators—a small one to use on skin, and a conically shaped one to insert. Remember not to let go of a vibrator that is used inside the vagina or anus. Always hang on to it.
5. Condoms with vibrators. Even though vibrators are washable, many people prefer to slip a lubricated condom over a vibrator that they are using for penetration. This adds more protection against bacteria.
 6. Soft versus hard plastic. Increasingly, sex therapists are cautioning people to be very careful of the soft or jelly like vibrators. Although people enjoy the flexibility of these, the actual plastic used may not be good to use on skin or against a mucus membrane. (The vagina, inner labia, and anus are all mucus membranes and not skin.) Journalist Kyle Norris wrote a very thoughtful investigative piece in <http://www.environmentreport.org/>. Go to that website and type in 'vibrators' to read her full report. This report is about soft jelly vibrators, not the hard plastic ones.

We quote some of her report about the purchase of vibrators that were tested for carcinogens:

“Cheaper-end sex toys are made with polyvinylchloride, or PVC. PVC is a synthetic material used in tons of things like building materials, medical appliances, everyday household items and children's toys. And much like the children's toys, most of the cheaper adult toys are manufactured in China. There are no regulations on the manufacture of the adult toys in China, and no regulations on the imports of toys in the United States.

In order to make PVC softer and more flexible - which is a desired effect in certain adult toys - plasticizers called phthalates are added. And a lot of phthalates go into jelly toys to make them more jelly-like. In fact, the leaching toys Jennifer Pritchett had ordered are actually called jelly toys. But that very un-technical term did not sit well with Pritchett. She sent a few of the best-selling toys on the market to an independent chemist. To see what the adult toys were really made of.

For instance one of the most famous sex toys in the country is called "The Rabbit." Everybody knows about that. Sex and The City had a big episode about the rabbit habit. Oprah Winfrey gave away one to every person in her audience. They're everywhere. And I sent that particular toy to a lab, and it came back that 60% of the total weight of that toy, so 60% of the total volume of material is a chemical called dioctyl phthalate, which is a known carcinogen and teratogen.....”

We encourage people to be thoughtful about vibrator purchases.