



Dilator Therapy

Like any other muscle in the body, pelvic floor muscles can become strained and build up tension. This tension causes the pelvic floor to spasm, creating pain in the pelvic area. This pain may be constant and affect every day activities or the pain may be triggered when something comes in contact with the pelvic floor such as during intercourse or when moving your bowels.

Pushing on the muscles of the pelvic floor during spasm can help to relax them and can help in decreasing or eliminating the spasm. One way to apply pressure is with a dilator. Dilators are smooth plastic cylinders that are rounded at the end. They come in different sizes. Your healthcare team will assist with fitting you with the right size. You will need to take 10 minutes out of your day for dilator therapy. Most women complete the therapy before bed and/or before intercourse. Dilator therapy should also be performed before intercourse.

Before beginning dilator therapy, you will need to obtain a lubricant to make insertion of the dilator easy. Lubrication can be purchased in any drug store in the same area as birth control items and condoms. Use a water-based product rather than petroleum jelly. ®Astroglide, KY Jelly and ®Surgilube are commonly used brands.

To use the dilator, lie down in a semi-reclining position or a reclining position. Apply lubricant to the dilator and to the opening of your vagina. Use one hand to guide the dilator and, placing the other hand on your vulva, gently spread your labia and slowly guide the dilator into the vagina. Relax your muscles and apply gentle pressure to the dilator while slowly inserting it into your vagina.

Insert the dilator as far as is comfortable. You cannot lose the dilator inside your vagina; the dilator cannot pass the cervix. Try to hold the dilator in place for ten minutes, applying gentle pressure downward. After ten minutes, remove and clean the dilator. Dilators don't need special treatment. They can be cleaned with soap and water. The dilators can be wiped dry or air dried.

Sometimes you can locate the trouble spots causing muscle tension and spasms. If you are lying on your back, the problem spot most often reported is the lower part of the vaginal opening (near the area between the vaginal opening and the anus). You may use a thumb or finger to massage the muscle to help it relax. Some women have found it effective to "work" the pelvic floor muscles while showering. They put a foot up on the side of the tub, use a little bit of lubrication or water on their fingers, locate the muscle, and massage it gently. This helps to ease the tension.

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