

LUBRICATION AND OTHER ITEMS RELATED TO SEXUAL HEALTH

Adequate lubrication is an important part of positive sexual interaction. Below are listed lubrications that are widely available. This does not attempt to be a complete list, but rather describes commonly used lubricants. In drug stores, lubrication products are usually displayed near the pharmacy (prescriptions). Stores selling organic foods usually have a 'health' aisle. Often, you will find them located with other vaginal care and hygiene products. You can also check online at drugstore.com, goodvibes.com, babeland.com, even the 'Vermont Country Store' catalog carries great lubes and vibrators. Lubrication products are not contraceptives. Listed are water-based lubricants and silicone lubricants. The most readily accessible and often personally preferred lubricant is human saliva.

Caution: Some lubes have glycerin and some are 'glycerin free.' Although not well researched, glycerin has been shown to increase the production of yeast and irritation in the vagina for some women. It is found in many water-based lubes. Remember most lubes impair sperm's motility, so if trying to conceive, Pre-Seed is considered best option. Don't mix silicone lubes with silicone sex toys, it can cause the silicone in sex toys to deteriorate. Paraben, glycerin and glycol free are preferred by many people.

Prone to yeast infections and UTIs: If using organic oils like olive oil or vulva balms for menopausal dryness, use cautiously until you figure out if you are prone to yeast infections or UTIs. Health care professionals advise caution with oils. The oil can get into the urethra and contribute to urinary tract and bladder infections. If prone to yeast infections, also avoid silicone lubrications and stay with water-based lubes.

Towels: When using new lubricants, some people are concerned about staining sheets. Spread a large dark-colored beach towel on the bed before sexual activity begins.

LUBRICANTS:

Four ones to place high on the list:

Jo: Lubricant with silicone. Latex safe. Can be used as massage oil as well.

Good Clean Love: A product line of organic lubrications (goodcleanlove.com). Waterbased, glycerin and paraben free. Avoid fragrance products as they can irritate vaginal mucosa.

Sliquid Silver: Part of the Sliquid (well know name in lubricants) line. Waterbased, glycerin free and hypoallergenic.

Sliquid Organics: These are glycerin and paraben free lubes. Quite a selection.

Silicone based: Uberlube (www.uberlube.com) is great. Glycerin and paraben free. No fragrance. Can be used for dilator therapy too. Must be purchased at their website or through Amazon or drugstore.com

Astroglide: A long lasting, light lubrication that is odorless and flavorless. It is water soluble. Many like it because it is a long lasting lubricant that does not become "stringy." It is available by calling 1-800-325-5695. They can tell you if a local pharmacy carries it or you can mail order it directly from them. This company has a variety of lubes, some are glycerin free, and they even have a vaginal moisturizer.

Good Lubrications: From makers of Astroglide, but this is glycerin-free. Has the Astroglide slipperiness.

K-Y Jelly: Generally considered an all-purpose lubricant that many people have found helpful with a "medium" degree of thickness. Some report it comes out too fast and gets "gummy."

KY Gel Preferred by some as less sticky than K-Y Jelly.

- Liquid Silk Glycerin-free. Comes in a pump, Odorless. Has a lotion-like feel.
- Lubrin: A suppository. Many post-menopausal women find this a helpful lubricant because, since it is inserted into the vagina, it lasts longer. They indicate that it needs some time to melt inside the vagina because it is a suppository. For some women, they indicate that it is almost "too much" lubrication.
- Moist Again Natural feeling, lasting. 800.537.8658.
- Natural Lubrication by Emerita. 800.455.5182. Available in "organic foods" type stores.
- Pre-Seed Vaginal lube and moisturizer for those couples trying to conceive. Sperm motility better. (Agarwal et al; Fertil Steril. 2008; 89:375-9).
- Probe Silky Light Gentle, odorless, glycerin-free, taste-free, and paraben-free.
Good for those with sensitivities. Probe Classic is thicker, but not glycerin-free.
- Slippery Stuff Gel Glycerin-free, taste-free, thicker lubricant. Also think about Sliquid. Many like slippery stuff.

Silicone Lubricant:

Silicone lubricants don't dry out like water-based ones, but silicone lubes are 'very slippery' so be careful not to spill them on the shower/bathroom floor. These lubes can also do double duty as massage oil.

Uberlube (see above)

ID Millennium—Not water-soluble and has no glycerin. Good slipperiness.

Pink—A little 'thinner' than 'ID Millennium'. No glycerin. Also used as a moisturizer. Good slipperiness.

Natural alternatives:

Vitamin E oil: Available in health food stores, preferred by some women for natural, non-irritating qualities. Can be ordered in suppository form with prescription--Carlson KEY-E suppositories, 30 IU vitamin E, nonlaxative. Use one or more times daily in the vagina. As a lubricant, some people like "Jason's Natural Vitamin E Oil, 5,000 IU Pure Beauty Oil"(4 fl oz). Natural oils should not be used with condoms as they can weaken condom latex and cause tears or disintegration of the condom. Some women report extra virgin olive oil works well—remember the UTI/yeast infection caution above.

'NO ESTROGEN' VAGINAL MOISTURIZERS

Luvena: prebiotic moisturizer and lubricant. Available at www.drugstore.com. Women who choose not or cannot use localized estrogen replacement to the vagina often use this vaginal gel. It does not dissolve too quickly. Reduces sensation of vaginal dryness or irritation. Another product with similar properties: KY Liquibeads. They cost about the same.

SPERMICIDAL GELS

Remember that a spermicidal gel has a distinctly chemical taste, so it is not preferred for oral sex. These gels were designed for diaphragm use. They may also irritate when used on external genitalia like the vulva.

CONDOMS

Latex condoms prevent spread of HIV or STD's. *Consumer Reports* rates Durex Ultra Sensitive Lubricated #1. Lifestyles Ultra Sensitive Lubricated was also top ranked. At *Consumer Reports* on the web you can check these out as well as non-lubricated, non-latex, and delayed ejaculation choices. Lifestyles SKYN is a nonlatex alternative for those allergic to latex. SKYN is like an ultrathin and has no taste/odor. Oils (e.g. baby oil, Vaseline, and cold cream) weaken the latex of a condom and can cause tears or disintegration of the condom. Use only water-based lubricants or spermicidal gels with condoms.

VAGINAL DILATORS

www.vaginismus.com: Has reputable website and reasonably priced dilators.

www.pureromance.com. Set of six dilators/silicone. Some people also use anal plugs in different sizes.

SEXUAL ENRICHMENT AIDS and more.....

The Sexuality Library/Good Vibrations: sex toys, vibrators, and lots more. (They have customer ratings and pictures to help decide what to buy) 800.289.8423 www.goodvibes.com. Also may want to check out: www.a-womans-touch.com, www.babeland.com, www.cleosboutique.com, [pureromance.com](http://www.pureromance.com), www.ohmibod.com, www.libida.com. There are many others. Erotica: www.eroctica-readers.com or www.cleansheets.com.

For more general information on the web: Google “sexual health and...” Never Google ‘sex,’ as there are so many entries, it will melt your computer! Try goaskalice@columbia.edu, and sexualhealth.com.

STIs: American Social Health Association: www.ashastd.org

To find a nationally certified sex therapist: www.aasect.org.

Sallie Foley, LMSW, Certified Sex Therapist

Director, University of Michigan Sexual Health Certificate Program

Author: **-Sex and Love for Grown-ups, -Sex Matters for Women: A complete guide to taking care of your sexual self** (co-authored with Sally Kope and Dennis Sugrue)