

What is Vaginal Dilatation?

Vaginal Dilatation involves gently enlarging the vagina using a customised appliance to slowly increase the width and length of the vagina to allow normal function. The procedure may be required to maintain the size of the vagina after surgery.

Why Would I need to use Vaginal Dilators?

Vaginal dilators are helpful for teenagers and women with a wide range of conditions affecting the vagina and vulva. They help to create or maintain normal vulval and vaginal function.

What Are The Benefits Of Vaginal Dilatation?

Dilators are often helpful in widening a narrowed vagina, without resorting to surgery. Following vaginal surgery it may also be necessary to use dilators to keep the tissues around the operation site healthy.

What Are The Disadvantages Of Vaginal Dilatation?

You really need to have privacy and uninterrupted time to use your dilators, which can be awkward in some busy households. With privacy, you can relax and be confident. You also need to be prepared to put up with some discomfort while using your dilators. Unfortunately, it is a bit uncomfortable but not unbearable.

Would Someone Help Me Make The Decision?

Yes. Usually your doctor or nurse will recommend a treatment with vaginal dilators. It may also be possible to talk things through with a psychologist or a counselor.

How Does It Work?

The vaginal tissues become softer and more pliable over time. The vagina is gradually developed where it has not previously developed or where it is rather narrow. Following surgery to lengthen or widen the vagina, the new vaginal tissues are maintained in a healthy condition by using the dilators or vibrators.

Do I Have To Keep Doing It?

It is important that dilatation is continued when the desired function is obtained to maintain the improvement.

Is It Painful?

It can feel a little strange at first, or unpleasant, but after a short while, most women and teenagers can use them quite easily. If you are not used to examining yourself or find it difficult to do so, speak to your SGAN nurse or doctor who can support and reassure you.

How Do I Do It?

Try to relax as much as possible as this may help reduce any discomfort. It is useful to moisten the tip of the dilator or vibrator with some jelly, like KY jelly, or some baby oil to reduce the friction. It can be a bit messy, so it is a good idea to sit or lie on a towel. You press with the tip of the dilator just at the entrance to your vagina, quite firmly but not so as to cause pain, and keep the pressure on for 5 minutes or so twice a day. The direction is from the entrance to your vagina upwards and backwards, aiming for your sacrum, the flat bone at the base of your spinal column. Once you have carried out your dilatation, just rinse the dilator or vibrator in warm water and dry it and put it away for your next use. You can use soap on some of the dilators, but check the packaging as soaps can destroy some of the plastics used in vibrators.

Are There Any Alternatives?

Some teenagers and women feel more at ease using dilators which are usually obtained at the hospital clinic or on prescription. For others they prefer vibrators as these tend to be curved and slightly easier to insert. Vibrators can be purchased in person or online from various suppliers.

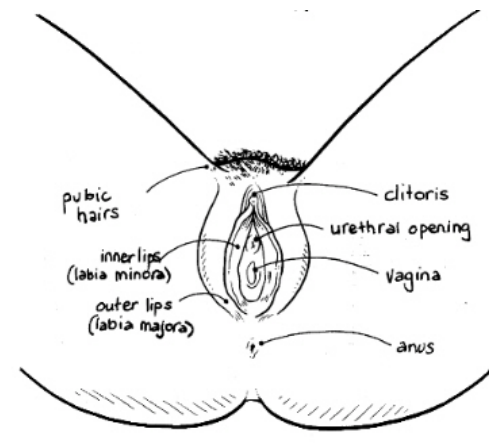
Where Can I Get Support From?

It can be helpful to have the support of others who are going through what you are experiencing. You can also discuss this with your hospital doctor or nurse at the specialist clinics that are run by SGAN.

For some women it is helpful to go through issues with a clinical psychologist and this can be arranged through the clinic. All these professionals can also arrange for you to talk to others like yourself.

The following websites can provide further information and you can also use them to contact others.

www.sgan.nhsscotland.com
www.ahn.org.uk
www.aissg.org
www.mrk.org.uk
www.congenitaladrenalhyperplasia.org





www.sgan.nhsscotland.com

If you would like further copies of this information leaflet or if you have any comments on improving the contents of this leaflet, please contact the SGAN office at 0141 201 0693.

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Patient Information Leaflet