

Choosing a Personal Lubricant

Helpful information to get you started

What is a personal lubricant?

A personal lubricant is a liquid or gel that is applied to the vagina, penis, anus, vaginal dilator or sex toys to make them wetter.

How does a personal lubricant help?

- It increases lubrication and reduces pain from rubbing between body tissues and or objects. Rubbing and friction can cause tiny tears in vaginal tissues, which may cause discomfort or pain.
- It may reduce the risk of infection and pain by making sexual activity easier.

Personal lubricants **do not** improve vaginal dryness. Use a vaginal moisturizer to improve vaginal and vulvar dryness, and use a personal lubricant with sexual activities and vaginal dilators.

How do I choose the right lubricant?

- Ask yourself what you are using it for and refer to the table on the next page.
- If you are using lubricant with a silicone vaginal dilator or sex toy, use a water-based lubricant.
- Read the ingredients and check for anything that might irritate you such as glycerine, parabens or artificial dyes.
- Ask if you can sample it first. Put a drop on your wrist and rub it in for about one minute. This will give you a sense of how the lubricant feels, how long it will last and if it will irritate your skin.
- When buying a lubricant for the first time, get a sample pack or the smallest bottle available.

Where can I buy lubricant?

Most pharmacies or department stores sell different types of lubricant. You can also buy them online or at sex-positive adult stores.

How do I use a lubricant?

The easiest way is to apply it to your fingers, vaginal dilator, adult toy, vagina or penis. Use a small amount to start and add more if needed. For more information on Cancer and Sexuality visit [MyHealth.Alberta.ca](https://myhealth.alberta.ca)

Point the camera of a smartphone on this QR code to take you to the Cancer and Sexuality [MyHealth.Alberta.ca](https://myhealth.alberta.ca) web page.



Types of Lubricant	Examples	Positives	Negatives
Water Based	Astroglide® Probe® Slippery Stuff® K-Y Liquid® Silk-E®	<p>Gel or liquid form; easy to clean up</p> <p>Thin gels are like the body's natural lubrication. Water-based lubricants work well for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Penetrative intercourse • Sexual touching • Masturbation • Vaginal dilators (silicone, plastic) • Latex condoms • Sex toys • Sensitive skin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can get sticky and needs to be reapplied often (adding a bit of water or saliva can reactivate them) • If you have sensitive skin check the label before you buy. Propylene glycol and chlorhexidine can be irritating
Silicone Based	Gun-Oil® Pjur® Pink® Sliquid®	<p>Last longer and feel more natural</p> <p>Can be used in the shower or tub</p> <p>Less likely to irritate (only contains silicone)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need soap to wash off the skin • Can stain bedsheets • Do not use with sex toys or silicone vaginal dilators — it will break down the materials the toys are made of • Do not work with some condoms — read the label before using with condoms
Natural Oil Products	Olive Oil Coconut Oil Almond Oil	Natural products	<p>Can break down materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • do not use with sex toys • do not use with condoms <p>Can result in tiny tears in vaginal tissues</p>
Do not use these products	Baby Oil Vaseline® Massage oil Aromatic oils	<p>Do not use these products, they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the risk of infection by trapping bacteria • Can irritate sensitive areas on your body • Break latex condoms 	

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