

Patient Pessary Information

What is a vaginal pessary?

A vaginal pessary is a device that supports the vagina. Pessaries have been proven to be as successful as surgery in relieving prolapse symptoms. We use silicon pessaries, which are inert and safe in your body. Because pessaries come in a number of shapes and sizes, you may need to try a few before you find one that is comfortable and provides the right support.

How does a pessary work?

The pessary sits high in the vagina and supports the prolapse. When it's in the correct position you should not be able to feel it, and it should make day to day activities more comfortable if you previously sensed the prolapse. You can have sex while wearing some pessaries (e.g. rings), and neither you nor your partner should be able to feel it. Others (e.g. cubes) need removal.

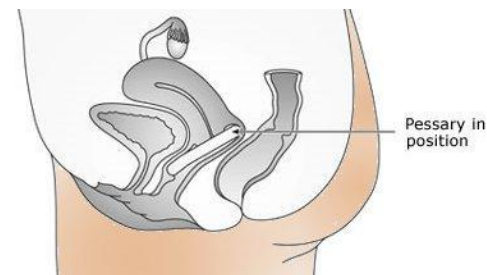
You can use the pessary on a "needs" basis (e.g. for running, playing sport, gardening, daytime) or some can stay in for up to 6 months. Pessaries are safe, long term treatments for prolapse but they will need to be removed and washed regularly – that may be daily, weekly or 3-6 monthly. You can do this yourself or come back to your physio, your GP or your gynaecologist.

How is a pessary inserted?

A pessary is inserted (and removed) through the vagina. Most women can learn to insert and remove it themselves and it quickly becomes easy. The wrong size might slip or even may fall out, but it cannot end up anywhere else in your body.

Benefits of trying a pessary

- Can reduce the symptoms of prolapse or incontinence
- May prevent/reduce prolapse worsening
- Is less invasive and complicated than surgery
- Doesn't require activity restrictions or time off work
- Provides important guidance about the most suitable type of surgery should surgery eventually be required





Possible problems with using a pessary

| | | |
|---|----------|----------------------|
| ● Increased clear discharge required / tell physio | Common | No action |
| ● Irritation, discomfort, pessary slipping pessary & see physio | Common | Remove |
| ● Smelly, coloured or bloody discharge | Uncommon | See GP |
| ● Trouble passing urine physio/GP | Uncommon | Remove pessary & see |
| ● Increased wetting & see physio for different pessary | Uncommon | Remove or pad |
| ● Trouble passing bowel motions pessary & see physio/GP | Uncommon | Remove |

Most of these side effects are minor and can be successfully managed by changing the type or size of your pessary, using vaginal oestrogen or removing the pessary for a while to give your body “a break”. A vaginal infection may need antibiotics, therefore smelly or coloured discharge needs to be checked by your GP. Very rarely the pessary can cause pressure areas in the vagina - if it becomes painful or you notice any bleeding, please see your GP. Attachment to the vaginal walls can only occur with neglected pessaries. Make sure your Dr and next of kin or emergency contact person are aware of the pessary’s existence.

Follow-up is essential

After initial fitting you must have the pessary checked within 1-2 weeks then again at 4 months. Thereafter an annual check is needed and the pessary should be replaced. If you are engaging in more challenging exercise, we recommend a check-up after 1 month of starting the exercise to ensure that the prolapse is not worsening.

You have been fitted with a: _____

A L C H E M Y
I N M O T I O N



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