

VAGINAL DRYNESS

Vaginal dryness, irritation, and tightness, which can make intercourse painful, are very common symptoms in breast cancer patients during and post-chemotherapy as well as when on hormonal therapy. Below are two recommended products and other tips to help relieve these symptoms:

- **Vaginal Moisteners** are applied with a slim applicator or vaginal suppository two or more times a week prior to bedtime. Examples include coconut oil, vitamin E, Replens, Luvena, or Hyalo Gyn.
- **Vaginal Lubricants** are applied immediately before sexual activity outside the vagina. Water-based lubricants without perfumes are best. Examples include Astroglide, Liquid Silk, Slippery Stuff, Vmagic or Pink.

OTHER TIPS TO IMPROVE VAGINAL HEALTH:

- **Avoid using products that could be irritating or promote dryness**, such as bubble bath, lotions, deodorants, perfumes, harsh or deodorant soaps, or douches in the vaginal area.
- **If you experience pain with insertion**, apply topical aqueous-based lidocaine to the vaginal vestibule three minutes prior to intercourse.
- **Regular sexual activity or stimulation** helps to increase circulation to the vagina, promoting healthy tissues.
- **Pelvic floor muscle training and Kegel exercises** help to strengthen vaginal walls, promote elasticity, and improve bladder leakage.
- **Regular use of vaginal dilators.**

SEXUAL HEALTH REFERENCES FOR WOMEN AFTER BREAST CANCER THERAPY

BOOKS:

- *100 Questions and Answers About Breast Cancer Sensuality, Sexuality and Intimacy* by Michael L. Krychman, Sandra Finestone and Susan Kellogg
- *Woman Cancer Sex* by Anne Katz

WEBSITES:

- Life After Cancer Treatment: [Cancer.gov/CancerTopics/Coping/Life-After-Treatment](https://www.cancer.gov/cancer-topics/coping/life-after-treatment)
- All About Sexual Health: [Livestrong.com/Sexual-Health](https://www.livestrong.com/sexual-health)
- North American Menopause Society: [Menopause.org](https://www.menopause.org)
- American Congress of Obstetricians & Gynecologists: [ACOG.org/Patients](https://www.acog.org/patients)