

Vaginal pessary

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Pessary information

You have been given this leaflet to help answer some questions you may have about having a vaginal pessary fitted or changed.

Prolapse is a term that refers to any organ of the body that has moved from its usual position. In gynaecology this is referred to as the altered position of the uterus (womb) and/or the vaginal walls. It is a common condition and is not life threatening.

You may be able to improve your symptoms of prolapse by making lifestyle changes, such as losing weight, stopping smoking or reducing very heavy physical work.

We recommend that you carry out pelvic floor muscle exercises. These can help strengthen the muscles and ligaments in your pelvis and, depending on how big the prolapse is, this may help reduce your prolapse.

What is a vaginal pessary?

A vaginal pessary is a plastic or silicone device that is placed in the vagina to help symptoms of pelvic organ prolapse. The device comes in different shapes and sizes. The pessary you are fitted with will be specific for you.

You will have your pessary fitted by a doctor or specialist nurse. It may take a few tries to get the right one.

We will ask you to come for a follow-up appointment in 4-6 months' time, to check that you are happy with the pessary and to change it.

What happens if my pessary falls out?

There is no need to be worried and you can ring for an appointment to have another pessary fitted or reassess your options.

What if I have bleeding from the vagina?

It is advisable to ring the department. You may need to come in for an internal examination and ultrasound scan.

What if I develop a vaginal discharge?

Vaginal discharge can be normal with a pessary. We advise you to wear a small panty liner, but if the discharge becomes very heavy, offensive or feels uncomfortable, please contact us.

What if the pessary comes down or I can feel it when I wipe myself?

If your pessary does come down, it is safe to push it up. It isn't unusual to feel the end of the pessary when you wipe yourself, especially if you are on the toilet. If you are having to push the pessary up many times a day, it is advisable to book an appointment.

Who do I contact with any queries or concerns?

If you need to change an appointment, or have any problems or concerns, please contact the gynaecology outpatient department.

Tel: 01271 311895

References

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (2019) *Urinary incontinence and pelvic organ prolapse in women: management*. Available at: <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng123/chapter/Recommendations> (Accessed: 05/05/2020).

National Health Service (2019) *Treatment - Pelvic organ prolapse*. Available at: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pelvic-organ-prolapse/treatment/> (Accessed: 05/05/2020).

Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (2013) *Pelvic organ prolapse*. Available at: <https://www.rcog.org.uk/globalassets/documents/patients/patient-information-leaflets/gynaecology/pi-pelvic-organ-prolapse.pdf> (Accessed: 05/05/2020).

PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, relatives, carers and friends, answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern call 01271 314090 or email rduh.pals-northern@nhs.net. You can also visit the PALS and Information Centre in person at North Devon District Hospital, Barnstaple.

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Tell us about your experience of our services. Share your feedback on the Care Opinion website www.careopinion.org.uk.

Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
Raleigh Park, Barnstaple
Devon EX31 4JB
Tel. 01271 322577
www.royaldevon.nhs.uk

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