

Vaginal Pessaries

WARWIKI

Patient Information · A removable device that supports prolapse — no surgery

A pessary is a soft, removable device placed in the vagina to **support pelvic organ prolapse** — and some types help with stress urine leakage. It is a safe, non-surgical option that relieves the bulge and pressure. For many people a pessary is not just a temporary measure but a comfortable long-term solution.

How It Helps

The pessary sits in the vagina and **holds the dropped organs up** in their normal position, easing the feeling of a bulge, heaviness, or pressure. Certain shapes also support the urethra to reduce **stress leakage** with coughing or activity.

Getting Fitted

Pessaries come in many shapes and sizes — the **ring** is the most common, with others (such as the Gellhorn) for more advanced prolapse. Your provider **fits** it in the office, and you may try a couple of sizes to find one that is secure but comfortable. A well-fitted pessary should not be felt and should not fall out or cause pain.

Using **vaginal estrogen** alongside is often recommended to keep the tissue healthy.

LEARN THE TERMS

Pessary

A removable vaginal device that supports prolapse.

Prolapse

When pelvic organs drop and cause a bulge or pressure.

Ring pessary

The most common, simplest type; often self-managed.

Gellhorn

A support pessary used for more advanced prolapse.

Fitting

Choosing the size/shape that is secure and comfortable.

Erosion

A small sore that can form if a pessary isn't cared for — preventable.

Vaginal estrogen

Often used with a pessary to protect the tissue.

WILL I FEEL IT OR CAN I BE ACTIVE? A properly fitted pessary should be comfortable enough that you don't feel it, and you can be fully active — including exercise. Many people leave it in for daily life and remove it only for cleaning. It can take a visit or two to dial in the right fit.

Caring for It

- 1 Self-managed:** many people learn to **remove, wash with soap and water, and reinsert** the pessary themselves — nightly, weekly, or as advised.
- 2 Provider-managed:** if you don't remove it yourself, you'll have **periodic office visits** (often every few months) to clean and check it.
- 3** Keep up **regular follow-up** either way, so the tissue stays healthy.
- 4** Use vaginal estrogen if recommended to prevent irritation.

What to Expect

- Some **discharge** is common; it can be managed.
- You can usually still have sex with a ring pessary in place (some types are removed first).

Call your team if you have:

- Pelvic **pain**, new bleeding, or a foul-smelling discharge
- The pessary **falls out** or you **can't remove it**
- Trouble urinating or having a bowel movement
- You missed follow-up — a forgotten pessary can cause sores

Good to Know

- A pessary can be tried at any time and stopped any time.
- It's a great option if you want to avoid or delay surgery.

THREE THINGS TO REMEMBER

- A pessary is a removable device that supports prolapse (and some help stress leakage) — a safe, non-surgical, often long-term option.
- It's fitted in the office; a good fit is comfortable and stays put. Vaginal estrogen helps protect the tissue.
- Care for it yourself or at regular visits, and keep up follow-up. Report pain, bleeding, foul discharge, or a pessary you can't remove.