

The **Vaginal Renewal™** Program is intended to be used by any woman experiencing vaginal dryness and/or atrophy. The program promotes blood flow to the skin of the vulva and vagina, and encourages more skin flexibility and thickness.

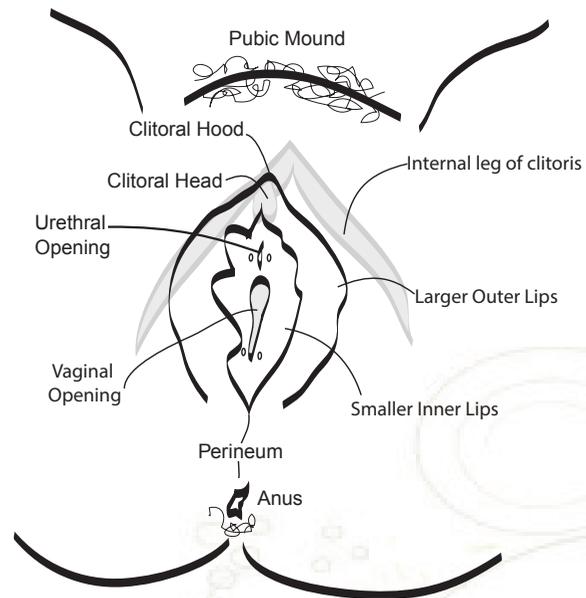
There are two main parts of the Vaginal Renewal™ Program, and both are important for reducing vaginal dryness. The *first* involves moisturizing the outer genital skin, sometimes called the vulva. The *second* involves moisturizing and healing the vaginal surface itself.

CHOOSING PERSONAL LUBRICANTS

Lubricants applied directly to the skin and vagina are a good solution for vaginal dryness. Choosing the right one is important. Two main features should be considered when making your choice, whether they:

- **add moisture to the skin and/or**
- **seal in moisture.**

To moisturize, look for water-based ingredients, Figure 1. The vulva.



because water = moisture. Other ingredients (called humectants) hold water at the surface of the skin. Sealing lubricants hold water in place, and don't allow it to dry away.

Moisturizing ingredients:

- Aloe Vera,
- Hyaluronic Acid,
- Hydroxyethylcellulose or plant cellulose,
- Carrageenan

Sealing ingredients that do not add moisture:

- Dimethicone,
- Dimethiconol,
- Vitamin E (use in combination with other ingredients),
- Coconut Oil/butter (use in combination with moisturizing ingredients only).

Recommended brands:

- Oasis Silk (moisturizes & seals),
- Sliquid Organics Silk, green label, (moisturizes & seals) ,
- Pink Indulgence (moisturizes & seals),
- Sliquid Satin (moisturizes only),
- Liquid Assets (moisturizes only),
- Hyalogyn (moisturizes only),
- FeMani Smooth Touch (silicone, seals only),
- Uberlube (silicone, seals only).

Avoid:

- Glycerin,
- Mineral oil,
- Olive Oil,
- Jojoba Oil,
- Beeswax or Paraffin,
- Petrolatum/Petroleum ointment (unless instructed by your health care provider),
- Low-quality silicones: cyclopentasiloxane and cyclomethicone.

STEP 1 - EXTERNAL VULVA MASSAGE AND MOISTURIZING

This involves massaging the entire vulva (both sets of lips, the opening of the vagina, and the place between the vagina and anus) to bring blood to the skin and encourage skin health.

- First apply about a quarter-sized dab of a moisturizing lubricant and smooth it lightly around so everything is slippery.
- Then use your finger tips (two or three) to press into the skin and then let the pressure up (called “press-and-release massage”), working your way around the outer lips of your vulva - where the hair grows. It might help to think of a clock face and work your way from 12:00 around and back to 12:00 again.
- When you are finished massaging your outer lips, massage your inner lips - where hair doesn't grow. Add more moisturizing lubricant as needed.
- Gently pinch the inner lips between your thumb and fingertips, with a gentle, squeezing motion. This should not hurt; your goal is just to move the blood out and allow it to return.
- Work your way all around the inner lips on both sides and up to the clitoris. Press and release on the clitoris and clitoral hood, too.
- Next massage the area around your vaginal opening using press-and-release all around the opening from 12:00 to 12:00 again.

The last area you should focus on is your *perineum*--the skin between your vaginal opening and anus. If you're having pain with penetration, it is *especially important* to include this part.

- Apply about a quarter-size portion of lubricant to your thumb and index finger, and gently insert your thumb into your vaginal opening.
- Press down into the skin of your lower vaginal wall (toward your anus) with your thumb while gently squeezing the tissue of the perineum with your index finger.

- Allow the muscles underneath the skin to relax and gently sweep your lubricated thumb from side to side. You are not trying to stretch the skin, but rather help it become more flexible.
- Take a deep breath if it's tight and as you release the breath think of softening the muscles you are touching.

STEP 2 - INTERNAL MASSAGE

We recommend using a vibrating wand because it is difficult to fully massage the vaginal walls with your own fingers. The **FeMani Wands** are ideal because of their smooth surface and specially-designed vibration, however any smooth-shelled straight vibrator with a low-speed throbbly-style vibration will offer some benefit in this program.

Choose the vibrator *width* by determining how many of your own lubricated fingers you can fit inside your vagina when you are not sexually aroused. If you are unable to comfortably have intercourse, or require the use of the pediatric speculum for a pelvic exam, we suggest you start with the smallest size 1 wand. If you are currently having comfortable intercourse, you may choose to start with the size 2 wand.

- First coat the wand with your moisturizing lubricant and gently insert it into your vagina to a comfortable depth or all the way to the cervix (or cuff, if you've had an hysterectomy).
- Next turn the dial to a low or medium vibration setting and lay back.
- Relax as it massages the vaginal walls.
- There is no need to move the wand in and out or from side to side.
- We recommend five minutes or more per session, once or twice per day.
- You can switch to the next size wand when you are able to comfortably fit a lubricated finger inside along with the wand you are currently using.

If you are not comfortable using a vibrating wand,

but are comfortable touching your vulva and vagina with your hands you can do the internal massage with your fingers, using a moisturizing lubricant. You can also teach a partner how to do this and have your partner massage you before other intimate play begins.

CAUTIONS, AND MOVING FORWARD

If you experience pain or discomfort with any aspect of this program, discontinue it immediately. You should consult with your health care provider to determine how to proceed.

- Please do not engage in sex with vaginal penetration if it is uncomfortable.
- We encourage you and your partner to continue other pleasurable intimate play together without penetration. (After 4-6 weeks working with the VR program, most can resume or begin vaginal penetration with comfort.)

When engaging in intimate play involving vaginal penetration (intercourse, or finger play, or toys):

- We recommend using a silicone-based lubricant as your lubricant rather than the moisturizing lubricant you use for Vaginal Renewal™.
- Silicone lubricants will stay slippery much longer, and will help protect your skin from painful tearing.
- Use lubricant both inside your vagina, and on your partner, finger or toy. This slick barrier helps protect your skin and vagina.

Recommended silicone brands include:

- Uberlube (silicone),
- FeMani Smooth Touch (silicone).

PELVIC FLOOR MUSCLES & FLEXIBILITY

If penetration of 1.5 to 2.5 inches is comfortable, but then you feel as though you “run into a wall,” one of two things might be happening.

- Your pelvic floor may have lost its ability to relax and

flex enough to allow penetration (called High Tone Pelvic Floor Dysfunction), or,

- if you’ve previously experienced painful penetration, your pelvic floor may be contracting involuntarily to prevent penetration (called Vaginismus).

The first step is to verify that your experience of pain is indeed the result of an overly tight or inflexible pelvic floor. There are many conditions easily confused with high tone pelvic floor dysfunction, so self-diagnosis is difficult.

If you think you might have either of these conditions, we recommend that you start by seeing your health care provider and/or a pelvic floor Physical Therapist to obtain an accurate diagnosis. Any home-based therapy you attempt is likely to be more effective under the guidance of a pelvic floor physical therapist. For more information, pick up or download our brochure on Pelvic Floor Health.

OTHER SEXUAL HEALTH TIPS

In addition to the Vaginal Renewal™ program, in order to maintain the best possible sexual health we recommend you:

- **Enjoy at least one orgasm per week.**

Orgasms bring blood flow to your pelvis, which helps keep your tissues strong and thick and your pelvic muscles strong and flexible. It also utilizes your circulatory system and your nervous system, and helps keep everything running smoothly. If you are not as orgasmic as you used to be, the Vaginal Renewal™ program may help your orgasms become stronger again. If you are not able to orgasm now, or have never been able to, see our AWT Orgasms brochure, or the book *The Elusive Orgasm* by Vivienne Cass, PhD.

- **Eat the AWT Good Sex Diet.**

This is a whole-food Mediterranean diet which focuses on antioxidant-rich, colorful food. It

includes lots of fruits, vegetables, garlic, whole grains, nuts, beans, fish and poultry, but no high-fructose corn syrup sweetened products. Organic food has at least 30% more healthy antioxidants than conventionally grown food, so although it’s more expensive, it’s a much better health value. Chocolate, coffee, and tea also contain sex-healthy antioxidants. Don’t forget to drink water!

- **Exercise to a sweat 30 minutes a day, six days a week.**

Exercise is the best thing you can do for your overall health, and sexual health as well. Studies show that women who exercise until they sweat just before being sexual experience higher levels of sexual arousal than those who don’t. Prime your pump, and get moving.

- **Stop smoking.**

Also avoid second-hand smoke as well as places where people have smoked. Smoke contains chemicals that directly damage your blood vessels. Damaged blood vessels weaken your skin and lengthen the time it takes to heal from injury. So avoiding smoke in all forms is a major step towards protecting your sexual health.

- **Floss your teeth.**

How simple. Reducing inflammation in your gums cuts down on whole body inflammation. Body inflammation has a direct negative link to healthy sexual arousal, and flossing your teeth daily is one of the easiest ways to keep your sexual self in tip-top shape. Plus, your smile is worth it!

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Vaginal Renewal Program

~soothe vaginal dryness

~recover vaginal health
without using hormones

~tips for choosing
moisturizing lubricants



A Woman’s Touch
Sexuality Resource Center

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