

Sex Toys: Material & Care

Adapted from: Good Vibrations and Babes in Toyland.

For all Toy Use

If you'd like to swap toys with a partner or use the same toy vaginally and anally without interrupting the flow of things to wash up, put a condom on your toy (a new one for each use) to minimize the risk of transmitting viruses or bacteria.

Vibrators

Vibrators can be wiped clean with a cloth moistened with warm water or alcohol. Vinyl vibrator attachments can even be washed in the top rack of a dishwasher. To prevent corrosion of motor parts, don't ever immerse a vibrator in water (except, of course, waterproof vibrators).

Silicone Toys

Clean silicone with mild soap and water, and make sure it's been rinsed well and is thoroughly dry before putting it away. (Most viruses and bacteria cannot live on a dry surface.) Silicone products can also be safely washed in the top rack of a dishwasher or sterilized by boiling (unless your dildo has any plastic parts attached).

Any toy made of silicone has a non-porous surface that will clean easily and thoroughly. Silicone is the best material for any toy that may be used by more than one person because it can be disinfected between people. If you boil a silicone dildo for 3-5 minutes in plain old water, you will have a safe playing field for the next person. You can just wash it with antibacterial soap if you are using it with the same person.

One word of caution: please do what you can to avoid breaking the surface of the silicone. Once even a small crack has formed, silicone toys can tear quite easily. So watch out for teeth and fingernails. If you are using a harness, make sure the dildo fits easily through the opening and does not have to be forced. Use some lubricant, if necessary (but don't use silicone-based lubricant with your silicone toys; silicone-based lubricant can damage silicone toys).

Beyond safety issues, silicone is also great because it holds warmth well. It will quickly pick up and hold your body heat (or you can cool it down). It takes lube well, and will outlast non-silicone dildos by years. The acids in vaginal secretions and the sugars in most lubes won't break down the surface.

Rubber Toys

Rubber dildos have surfaces that can pick up and hold onto infectious bacteria or viruses. Even a good wash with antibacterial soap won't give you a disinfected toy. As rubber dildos are porous, using condoms is the easiest way to keep them clean. You can use non-silicone dildos safely by putting a fresh condom on them every time you move it from one person to the next. If you intend to use it as your own private toy, clean it with antibacterial soap every time you use it, to keep from reintroducing yeast and any

bacteria that you may have. Make sure they have been rinsed well and are completely dry before putting them away.

Softskin® Toys

Softskin® is a semi-porous material; for this reason, we recommend using condoms on Softskin® Toys whenever possible.

Keeping your softskin® toy clean will help maintain its texture and quality. After each use clean your toy with mild soap and water and rinse well. Dry thoroughly (inside and out if it's a sleeve), away from a heat source. Dust with cornstarch inside and out. (Please don't use talcum powder to dust your softskin® toy if it will come into contact with a woman's genitalia; talc has been linked to cervical cancer in women.) Store the toy in a cool dry place away from the sun and strong light sources.

Harnesses

Keep your harness as clean as you would any other item of intimate apparel. Hand wash your harness with mild soap and water, and let it dry thoroughly before putting it away. Harnesses made from fabric are machine-washable. Be careful not to leave your leather harness in front of direct heat.

Latex Products

Use only water-based or silicone-based lubricants with latex, never oil or petroleum-based lubes. Keep latex in a cool, dry place. Don't re-use latex.

Note: There have been cases of Trichomonas passed during sex toy usage from an infected partner to a non-infected partner.