

VAGINAL PESSARY – PATIENT HANDOUT

What is a Vaginal Pessary

A pessary is a device that fits into the vagina to help support a prolapse of the uterus (womb), bladder and/or rectum (bottom of the bowel). A prolapse of the bladder is also known as a cystocele, and a prolapse of the rectum is known as a rectocele. A prolapse develops when one or more of the pelvic organs lose its ligamentous support so that it pushes down into the vagina. Prolapse is commonly caused by childbirth, aging, or following pelvic surgery and may take years to develop. Changes due to ageing and repeated force such as chronic coughing or straining can gradually worsen the prolapse over many years until it becomes noticeable. A prolapse may be fixed with surgery, or a vaginal pessary can be inserted to support the prolapse and relieve the symptoms coming from it.

What kind of pessary will I use?

You have been fitted with a Size Pessary ring.

The pessary has to be fitted correctly and it may take several tries to get the right one. After the first fitting, you will need to return in a week to have the pessary checked. After that you may only need to be checked every 3-6 months. Sometimes a different size or shape of pessary will have to be fitted.

Does the pessary cause any side effects?

You may notice more vaginal discharge than normal. This discharge may also develop an odour. Vaginal irritation is another possible side effect. You may need to use an oestrogen cream in the vagina. This will keep the vagina healthy while the pessary is in place. If you have an offensive vaginal odour, lots of discharge or blood in the discharge, you should immediately remove the pessary and contact the Practice Nurse at Care Gynaecology.

What else should I know?

After the pessary has been inserted you can resume all your normal day to day activities with the pessary insitu. You should actually have improved your ability to be active, as the pessary supports the prolapse and makes you more comfortable. The pessary is made from silicone and is inserted through the vagina. Be sure to tell you doctor straight away if you have any discomfort with the pessary or if you have trouble urinating or having a bowel movement. You should continue with pelvic floor exercises. Some pessaries, eg. Ring pessaries, can be worn during intercourse. Your specialist will advise you if your pessary needs to be removed for intercourse or not.

Can the pessary get lost or fall out?

The vagina is a closed tube so that the pessary cannot go anywhere else inside the body, however, the pessary can fall out of the vagina, for example, if you strain on the toilet or bend or squat to lift something heavy. This usually means that your pessary is too small. Should this happen, rinse the ring in warm water and wrap in tissue or place in a zip lock bag. Then contact the Practice Nurse at Care Gynaecology who will advise you on further management.

What is the cost?

The cost of a pessary ring is \$65 which covers our cost to supply the pessary ring. This is not claimable through Medicare. A one week pessary follow up appointment will be made with your specialist at a cost of \$90.00 with a Medicare rebate of \$38.60. Further appointments may be required with your specialist until the size of the pessary that best suits you is determined. All further routine pessary check appointments will be with our Practice Nurse at a cost of \$70.00 with a Medicare rebate of \$38.60.