

# Home Care Instructions for the Insertion and Care of Your Vaginal Dilator

## Why Do I Need a Vaginal Dilator?

Internal radiation therapy may cause scar tissue to form at the top of your vagina (vaginal cuff).

This may make vaginal examinations difficult in the future. You can prevent scar tissue from forming by using a vaginal dilator (a smooth plastic rod), and/or by having regular sexual intercourse.

## When Should I Start Using My Vaginal Dilator?

Your doctor will prescribe when to begin to use the dilator:

\_\_\_\_\_ weeks after your radiation therapy **begins** or

\_\_\_\_\_ weeks **after completing** your treatment

If not using the dilator you should be having intercourse two or three times a week. If you are unable to have intercourse, you should use your vaginal dilator.

You may have some spotting or bleeding from your dilator or intercourse the first few times. You may also have some discomfort. If discomfort occurs with intercourse, you and your partner may need to stop for a while and try again later.

## How to Use Your Vaginal Dilator

- Wash the dilator with soap and water before and after each use.
- Check the dilator to be sure it is smooth. Do not use the dilator if you find any rough spots.
- Coat the dilator with a water soluble lubricant like K-Y Jelly®, Astroglide®, or Replens®.

Do not use Vaseline®, baby oil, or other oil based lubricants. They are not water-soluble and can be irritating to the tissues in the vagina.

- Lie on your back with your knees bent and legs apart.
- Insert the rounded end of the dilator into your vagina as far as it will go without causing pain or discomfort.
- Close your knees and slowly straighten your legs.
- Keep the dilator in your vagina for about 10 to 15 minutes.
- Bend your knees, open your legs, and gently remove the dilator.
- Gently cleanse the skin around the vaginal opening.
- Wash the dilator after each use.

It is important that you use the dilator routinely until instructed otherwise by your doctor.

In an Emergency Call: \_\_\_\_\_