

## HISTORY

The vaginal pessary has a long history dating back thousands of years! Ancient pessaries were stones, pomegranates, linen, wool, and sponges. In the middle ages brass, cork, gold, and silver were the new materials. During the 1800's, the ring pessary was developed. Vaginal pessaries were redefined with advances in material science. Now there are silicone ones in many shapes and sizes. Few medical inventions have stood the test of time so well as the pessary.

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## COMMON USES OF PESSARIES

- To improve or restore continence.
- For diagnosis to determine if surgery is necessary.
- To delay or preclude surgery
- As an alternative to surgery.
- To manage uterine prolapse or vaginal wall hernias.
- To relieve a cystocele (bladder prolapse) or a rectocele.
- To relieve lower back pain caused by retroversion.
- Diagnosis and therapy in obstetrics.
- To prevent miscarriages by relieving pressure on a weak cervix.



## THE USE AND CARE OF PESSARIES

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*If you are a candidate for a pessary, you will find the following information useful.*

A pessary is a vaginal prosthesis that has evolved over centuries to become an effective medical device to relieve the stress of a cystocele, rectocele, uterine or bladder prolapse, or the problems associate with urinary incontinence. Pessaries come in various shapes, sizes, and materials. They are perfectly safe and comfortable for long term use.

Commonly asked questions:

**Will I always have to use this pessary?**

Not necessarily. Although pessaries are an alternative to surgery, your vaginal muscles may strengthen to the extent that your pessary is no longer required. Sometimes pessaries are only required for strenuous activities like jogging or hiking. Certainly if you are a candidate for surgery, your pessary is only temporary until corrective surgery can be performed.

**Can a pessary hurt or become uncomfortable?**

A properly fitted pessary will never cause pain or become uncomfortable. You should be able to perform your normal daily activities without any difficulty.

**How often should I remove my pessary?**

It is recommended that you remove your pessary daily to clean it using mild soap and water.

However, if you have difficulty removing your pessary contact your healthcare provider and make an appointment for removal and cleaning. Do not be alarmed if your appointment date is weeks away. It is not unusual for pessaries to remain in place from 4 to 12 weeks.

**What is my responsibility?**

Your responsibility is to follow your healthcare provider's instructions, wear your pessary, and keep all follow-up appointments. If you should move, be sure to contact your healthcare provider.

**Will my pessary set off the alarm at the airport?**

Absolutely not.

**Can I have sex with my pessary in place?**

You certainly can. If you need to remove your pessary, then do so.

**Will my pessary prevent pregnancy?**

No it will not. A pessary is not a contraceptive device. If you are sexually active, wear a pessary and need to avoid pregnancy, then discuss this with your healthcare provider.

**Can my pessary fall out?**

Yes it can. If your pessary is too small or you need a different type of pessary, sometimes it will fall out. Whenever this happens simply clean your pessary with mild soap and water and reinsert it. If it is a persistent problem then call your healthcare provider for an appointment. You may need a different size or type.

## **DAILY CARE AND HELPFUL TIPS**

**I can't remove my pessary, now what?**

If you want to remove your pessary but can't, don't panic. Simply call your healthcare provider and schedule an appointment.

**My pessary seemed to have moved out of position and is uncomfortable.**

Wash your hands, lay down and push the pessary as far up as you can. Don't worry, it can't get lost. It is impossible to push the pessary into your abdomen.

**I see some discharge and bleeding. what should I do?**

Sometimes pessaries can irritate body tissue causing a slight discharge or bleeding. Call your healthcare provider if this persists.

**What do I do about daily bathing?**

Do not change your normal bathing routine because you are wearing a pessary.

**Should I douche?**

You do not have to douche until instructed to do so by your healthcare provider.

### **\*IMPORTANT NOTE:**

Gehrung and Hodge Pessaries contain metal and must be removed prior to MRI, ultrasound and x-ray procedures.