

General information about vibrators

What vibrators do

There are many questions about vibrators. Vibrators are sexual aids sometimes called sex toys. They are commonly used in sexual stimulation. They do not substitute for interpersonal interaction and won't make a person decide to reject a partner as is sometimes implied in sitcoms or movies. As sex therapists often observe, couples might blame a vibrator when the couple isn't getting along interpersonally, but it's not the vibrator's fault. Vibrators provide more intense stimulation to nerve endings and some people find this arousing or pleasurable. However, the intense sensation is uncomfortable for some people. Vibrators can be used on different parts of the body, not just genitals, for sensual and sexual pleasure.

Note: Some use dildo and vibrator interchangeably, while others believe a dildo has no moving or mechanical parts.

Selecting a vibrator

If you are purchasing a vibrator for the first time, there are so many to choose from that it can seem overwhelming. Sex therapists recommend that you consider what is comfortable for you and that you follow some general guidelines:

1. Rechargeable or battery operated vibrators are easier to use for many people. Try to find vibrators that use standard types of batteries, not 'unusual' batteries. Many vibrators are operated with AA batteries, or watch batteries.
2. Waterproof. Try to look for vibrators that are not only washable (which they all should be) but also waterproof.
3. Price. Vibrators can range from cheap to pricey. In general, remember that these are electronic gadgets. Some may last five years, some may last 5 weeks. Try to stay on the moderate side pricewise unless you really know that an expensive model is exactly what you need.
4. Type. Many people use vibrators when masturbating and in partner activity. Vibrators can be tiny—a popular vibrator is oval or bullet shaped—and used both on the genitals and for 'all over body sensation.' Some vibrators are conical or 'penis shaped.' These are often used to insert into the vagina. Some vibrators are smaller and conical and these may be used for anal stimulation. Make sure that you don't 'share' vibrators with a partner or move a vibrator from the anus to the vagina. The anus has bacteria that would hurt the vagina. Some people settle for two vibrators: one to use 'outside'—on skin, and a conically shaped one to use on the



'inside'—either for vaginal or anal penetration. Remember not to insert and then let go of a vibrator that is used inside the vagina or anus.

5. Condoms with vibrators. Even though vibrators are washable, many people prefer to slip a lubricated condom over a vibrator that they are using for penetration. This adds more protection against bacteria.

6. Soft versus hard plastic. Vibrators come in all types. There are ones that are hard plastic, like the plastic of a drinking glass. There are soft plastic ones that are 'rubbery' like the plastic that is used to soften the grip on handles for many toothbrushes. There are also very 'jelly-like' soft plastic vibrators.

What material is used to make the vibrator?

Make sure that the salesperson who sells you a vibrator can assure you that the vibrator is made of the type of plastic that can be used on a human body. The plastic must not contain "phthalates". Be especially care to make sure that a vibrator of very soft or jelly-like plastic is made without phthalates. Although people enjoy the flexibility of these jelly-like plastic, the actual plastic used may not have been approved for use on skin or against a mucus membrane. (The vagina, inner labia, and anus are all mucus membranes and not skin.)

Journalist Kyle Norris wrote a very thoughtful investigative piece in <http://www.environmentreport.org/>. Go to that website and type in 'vibrators' to read her full report. This report is about the very soft jelly vibrators, not the rubbery or hard plastic ones. We quote some of her report about the purchase of vibrators that were tested for carcinogens: "Cheaper-end sex toys are made with polyvinyl chloride, or PVC. PVC is a synthetic material used in tons of things like building materials, medical appliances, everyday household items and children's toys. And much like the children's toys, most of the cheaper adult toys are manufactured in China. There are no regulations on the manufacture of the adult toys in China, and no regulations on the imports of toys in the United States. In order to make PVC softer and more flexible - which is a desired effect in certain adult toys - plasticizers called phthalates are added. And a lot of phthalates go into jelly toys to make them more jelly-like. In fact, the leaching toys Jennifer Pritchett had ordered are actually called jelly toys. But that very un-technical term did not sit well with Pritchett. She sent a few of the best selling toys on the market to an independent chemist. To see what the adult toys were really made of. For instance one of the most famous sex toys in the country is called "The Rabbit." Everybody knows about that. Sex and The City had a big episode about the rabbit habit. Oprah Winfrey gave away one to every person in her audience. They're everywhere. And I sent that particular toy to a lab, and it came back that 60% of the total weight of that toy, so 60% of the total volume of material, is a chemical called dioctyl phthalate, which is a known carcinogen and teratogen...."



Note: Goodvibes.com sells only the safe plastics. Make sure to check that the company you use does so as well.

Where do I find a vibrator

Vibrators can be found in in lots of places, including shops, Vermont Country Store Catalogs, and at lots of websites. Here are some recommendations:

If you are interested in purchasing vibrators online, two reputable sites that will not 'cookie' your computer, give you 'popups' or sell your name to mailing lists. These companies have been in the business of selling sex aids including sex toys for a long time.

www.babeland.com

www.goodvibes.com

Some of these companies also have toll-free numbers if you prefer to speak to someone and not order 'over the internet.'

Shipping and Packaging

Vibrators and other sex toys from these sites are shipped in neutral packaging, with neutral return addresses. Your mail carrier won't know what you've ordered. You can ask these companies if they will back up your product and replace it if it is defective or breaks within the first week of use.

I encourage people to be thoughtful about vibrator purchases.

