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INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE USE OF A PESSARY

Your doctor has recommended that you try using a pessary for your vaginal prolapse. A pessary is a vaginal prosthesis that helps support the bladder, rectum and or uterus if it is prolapsing.

A pessary is usually made of silicone material. It can be made of soft and pliable material or material that is a little more firm. There are several different sizes and shapes of pessaries and the degree of prolapse will determine the style and the size of pessary used. It may be necessary for you to try many different styles or sizes of pessaries to help with your prolapse. This process may require you to make additional visits to our office to get a proper fit.

FIRST VISIT

In the first visit, you will be asked to undress and lay down on an examining table. Your legs will have to be in stirrups for a short period of time. A quick vaginal exam will be done to determine the approximate size of pessary needed. The pessary will then be inserted. You may be asked to try to urinate, walk around for a little while or bear down to see if the pessary will stay in the appropriate place. If the pessary does not move and ins comfortable you will be sent home with a follow-up appointment.

HORMONE REPLACEMENT

You may be asked to use some hormone replacements in the vagina. Hormone replacement helps keep the vaginal tissue in better tone; it will help with local irritation to the vaginal area and make a better environment for the pessary. It is possible to have an inflammatory reaction to the hormone therapy. If you experience an increase in discomfort after initiation of the hormone therapy, please contact our office. After approximately 1-2 months, the hormone replacement dose could be decreased or omitted from your daily routine. If you have a history of breast cancer please let the doctor or nurse know that information. You could use alternative lubricants such as Replens or just K-Y jelly for vaginal dryness or irritation.

HYGIENE

With a pessary in place, you may bathe as you normally would. They used to change pessaries every day, but they really only need to be changed every 1-3 months based on your condition.

If you are sexually active, please let your nurse or doctor know that information. You may have intercourse with certain pessaries in place. Other pessaries may have to be removed prior to intercourse and replaced at a later time.

WHAT HAPPENS IF YOUR PESSARY STARTS TO FALL OUT

It is possible for your pessary to slip out of place especially when you have a bowel movement. If possible, and you have been instructed, you can gently push the pessary up in the vaginal vault. If your pessary slips completely out of the vaginal vault, please just wash the pessary with soap and water and bring it back with you to the office. You will more than likely have a different pessary placed at your next visit.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I START TO HAVE VAGINAL DISCHARGE

After the pessary is placed, you may have an increase in vaginal discharge. This is just your body's way of reacting to a foreign body being placed into the vaginal vault. This drainage should be clear or maybe slightly discolored. If you notice bright red discharge, foul smelling discharge or a lot of yellow drainage, you should contact your health care provider.

A pessary can be an additional option to vaginal prolapse. If you are not interested in pursuing surgery then it is a great option. It at times can be frustrating finding the appropriate fit, but it gets a lot easier after that! Your first visit could take up to an hour. Thereafter, the visits will be only 15-20 minutes to clean and reinsert the pessary.

HELPFUL HINTS FOR A BETTER EXPERIENCE WHEN USING A PESSARY

Often times people tend to get constipated either due to poor fluid intake, medications that they are taking or a decrease in mobility. When wearing a pessary, if you have to strain to have a bowel movement, the chance of dislodging the pessary is increased. It is to your benefit to try to keep your bowels softer and more regular by:

1. Having a good fluid intake
2. Eating a lot of fresh fruits and vegetables
3. Taking some sort of stool softener

Here are a few natural types of stool softeners:

¼ cup of peach or apricot nectar
¼ cup of prune juice

Mix the above together and drink daily

*** the prune juice could be substituted with any other type of juice

REGULAR PUDDING

¼ cup of applesauce
¼ cup of prunes (or prune juice if no blender)
¼ cup of unprocessed bran (Millers Bran – can be purchased in the flour aisle at the grocery store)

Stew prunes and mix all ingredients in the blender

Take 1 ounce (2 Tablespoons) one hour before your evening meal. Store the remainder in the refrigerator. The fresher the recipe, the more effective it is for regularity. (Try making a new batch every 2 weeks)

KEGEL EXERCISES

Pelvic floor exercises are very helpful when wearing a pessary. It not only helps in building up the pelvic musculature to better support the pessary, it may also improve any incontinence you may be having. Please see the instructions in your packet for kegel exercises.

If you have any questions regarding the pessary, please do not hesitate to contact Urology, PC.