



Dear Dr. Myrtle,

I see ads for personal lubricants but they don't explain much. What should I know about a lubricant before I buy one?

Lubricants increase pleasure.

Your genital skin is very sensitive. It cradles the nerve endings that allow you to experience touch and other sensations. And although skin is strong, it can be harmed by vigorous rubbing.

Sexual intimacy usually includes friction, and often the body doesn't have enough wetness or protection to last for an entire intimate episode. Lubricant can make sexual experiences more slippery, cushion-y, comfy, tasty and pleasurable.

Personal (sexual) lubricants:

- Allow you the touch **satisfaction** you want while preventing skin abrasion and dryness;
- Allow you to have pleasurable **stimulation** of all your nerve endings, whether or not your body produces its own lubrication;
- Are lots of **fun**—our customers who are reluctant to try lubricants come back to tell us how much more pleasure they enjoyed after they tried out their lube samples;
- **Moisturize** sensitive skin and increase **circulation** and skin strength when paired with regular massage;
- Increase pleasure while using latex or non-latex **barriers**, making for a sexy, sensitive slide—a dime-sized dab of lube transmits heat and sensation and keeps the material from breaking.

Choices, choices.

There are hundreds of personal lubricants on the market, so choosing the right one for your needs can be tough. Every person has different behaviors, different skin pH (acid/base balance), different tolerance to friction, different biologic environment, and different moisture needs. It's also hard, if not impossible, for manufacturers to formulate "the right lube." The following includes our most recommended lubricant features.

Not all lubes are "good" lubes.

Advertising doesn't mean something is good for you to use. Some lubricants were developed for spaceships, while others are medical lubricants not meant for friction. Using bad lubricants on your genitals can lead to skin irritation, hurt the skin's natural barrier defenses, and can lead to unnecessary pain and disability down the road.

Lube Ingredients or Features to Avoid:

- **Menthol.** Often used either as a "cooling" ingredient or a sensation enhancer, menthol is an alcohol that may severely irritate the skin, causing long-term skin pain.
- **Lidocaine.** This numbing product irritates skin surfaces, and because it lowers pain perception, lidocaine dramatically increases the risk of skin trauma and longer-term damage.
- **Capsaicin.** Usually found in warming, sensitizing or "arousal-enhancing" lubes, capsaicin is the oil of very hot chili peppers. Once applied, it triggers a pain reaction in the nerves that may last far longer than any intimate episode. Also may be difficult to remove from skin once applied.
- **Chlorhexidine.** This preservative found in many medical lubricants (KY Jelly, Surgilube) destroys normal, protective genital bacteria that help fight infections and maintain genital health.

Other Ingredients That Might Be A Problem:

Known Allergens and Skin Irritants. For some people, herbal extracts and raw, unprocessed aloe gel can provoke allergic responses. For others, ingredients like propylene glycol, and preservatives like phenoxyethanol can physically irritate and disrupt the skin function. We recommend that anyone with known skin sensitivities test out any personal care product on the inside of their arm (easier to wash off and/or treat) before applying it to the genitals.

Glycerin. Glycerin is a fine lubricant ingredient for many people. But some lubricants containing glycerin—including KY Jelly, Astroglide and flavored lubes—induce hyperosmolar stress for skin cells. Glycerol/glycerin is able to pass through cell

membranes, causing the cells to become unstable. Because of this we generally suggest avoidance of lubricants containing glycerin, although many people use glycerin without problems, and enjoy glycerin's slippery texture.

Oils. Oils are fine for external use, and some men find that self-pleasuring with an oil or cream creates a slippery, cushiony experience. However, the vagina is a sensitive environment that cannot easily clean out oils, and so using them vaginally may cause irritation or infection. Also, petroleum-based oils (mineral or baby oil) break down latex products. If you enjoy the feeling of oils, silicone lubes are a vagina-friendly, barrier-compatible choice that still provide a slippery, long-lasting feel.

How to Use Lubricant

Here are our suggestions about how to put your lube to good use.

When do I reach for the lube bottle?

Use a personal sexual lubricant:

- For skin-to-skin contact involving rubbing or motion,
- Any time—during solo or partnered play—when the friction of a hand, vibrator, or other toy is uncomfortable rather than pleasurable,
- When touching involves the genitals, including the opening of the vagina or anus (even if penetration is not the goal),
- When you think you might prefer a more slippery feeling against your genital skin,
- Before putting on a condom or using other barriers,
- Before anal or vaginal penetration (with fingers, toys, or other body parts),
- When you experience regular discomfort or pain from vaginal dryness, even if you're not planning on having a sexual encounter.

Avoid the Lubricant Blues

I don't like using lube because it's cold and kills my mood. What can I do about that?

We agree. Especially in the cold months, there's

no need to experience cold lube on tender skin. Try these tricks from here in Wisconsin:



- Put a dab of lube in your palms and rub vigorously to warm your lube (and your hands) up. If moisturizing lubes soak into dry hands, add more before continuing your play.
- Try putting a bit of lube on the back of your hand and let it warm up while you are doing other things.
- Fill a bowl with warm tap water; place it near nearby, and let your sealed bottle or (waterproof) packet of lube go swimming for ten or fifteen minutes. This does take a little planning, but it gives lube a more friendly and luxurious feeling.

Where should I store my lube?

Put your lube away carefully.

- If you use silicone lube, or if your bottle doesn't close, protect your other belongings by storing the container(s) in a zippered plastic baggie. There's nothing worse than opening the drawer of your night stand and finding a slippery mess.
- Shade and cool conditions are always a good idea. Although lube isn't usually affected by light or heat the way that barriers are, it is best not to expose your lube to extreme conditions.

Features of AWT's Most-Recommended Lubricants

1. **Reduces the friction** of sexual play and stays slippery to touch.
2. **pH** : Between 4.4 and 5.5 (compatible with most skin types).
3. **Water-base + silicone blend** (hydrates & moisturizes) OR silicone-only base (moisturizes only).
4. Uses a **genital-compatible preservative**.

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Personal Lubricants

	WATER BASED LUBRICANTS W/ GLYCERIN					WATER BASE W/O GLYCERIN						HYBRID LUBRICANT			SILICONE LUBRICANT			
	ID Glide	Probe Thick Rich	Flesh Lube	Pjur Med Glide	Sex Grease	Wet Organics	Sliquid Natural (blue)	Sutil Luxe (white)	Slippery Stuff Gel	Sliquid Gel (purple)	Sutil Rich (gray)	Sliquid Silk (green)	EroSense	Oasis Silk	Pink Indulgence	FeMani Smooth	One Move	Uberlube
Thinness vs. Thickness	Thin	Thin	Thin	Thin	Thicker	Thin	Thin	Thicker	Thicker	Thick	Very Thick	Thin	Thin	Thicker	Thick	Thin	Thin	Thicker
Runny or Gel?	Runny	Runny	Not Runny	Not Runny	Gel	Runny!	Runny	Gel	Gel	Gel	Gel	Runny, froths	Not Runny	Not Runny	Gel	Runny	Runny	Runny
Flavor? After Taste? (AT)	Little Sweet +AT	None	Sweet & Bitter +AT	Sweet, No AT	Little Bitter +AT	Sl Bitter + AT	None	Sweet, No AT	None, +AT	Sl Bitter +AT	Sweet, No AT	Little Bitter +AT	Little Sweet ++AT	Little Bitter +AT	Little Bitter +++AT	None	None	None
Great for Oral Sex		XXX		XXX			XXX	XX								XXX	XXX	XXX
Stays 'Wet' on Skin-Long Lasting		XX, but then sticky	XX, not sticky	XXX	XX	X	X	XXX	XX	X	xx	XX	XX	XXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX
Hydrates (adds water)				XXX	XX	XX	XX	XXX	XX	XX	X	XXX	XXX	X	XX			
Base Ingredient(s)	Water	Water	Water	Water	Water	Aloe	Aloe	Water, Oat Beta Glycan (gluten free)	Water	Aloe	Water, Oat Beta Glycan (gluten free)	Aloe	Aloe	Water	Water	Dimethicone	Dimethicone	Dimethicone
FDA Approved on Latex Condoms & Barriers	XX								XX					XX		XX	XX	XX
FDA Approved on Polyurethane Condoms & Barriers																XX	XX	
Acid/Base "pH"	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.0	5.2	5.2	4.8	6.0	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.0	4.8	4.8	4.4*	4.4*	4.4*

- ~Why use lubricants
- ~Learn how to choose a lubricant
- ~Learn how to use personal lubricants
- ~Learn storage tips for road trips

X=a little, XX= more, XXX= a lot; *silicone reads acidic on pH Paper

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