Lube for anal sex? [1]

Alice,

My lesbian partner and I just started having anal sex. There are several types of lubricants on the market. Are they all safe? Is silicone okay to use? Thank You for your help.

Answer

Dear Reader,

Since the anus and rectum are not self-lubricating, lubricants from a bottle, tube, or jar are extremely helpful for making anal penetration more comfortable and more pleasurable. Though the anus at times may feel wet, the small amount of natural mucus and sweat that are present can lead to discomfort, irritation, and infection without the addition of extra lube.

Hundreds of different lubricants are available. Water-based lube is generally considered to be the safest all-purpose lubrication. It is also popular since many people find it to be non-irritating and it does not cause latex to deteriorate. Some women find that water-based lubes containing glycerin or sugar can potentially cause yeast infections, particularly if they're already prone to getting them. This is often the case with some flavored lubes, which are for external-use only and are not to be used inside the vagina or anus. One minor drawback is that water-based lubes can dry more quickly than other forms of lubricant; however, adding a bit more lube, water, or saliva can reactivate its slippery properties.

Oil-based lubes are no longer recommended as a form of lubrication for safer sex. The oil can leave a coating on the rectum or vagina that can lead to bacterial or other infections. Oil-based lubes can also break down latex condoms, dams, gloves, other latex safer-sex products, diaphragms, and cervical caps, thus reducing their effectiveness. This is important to consider if you apply oil-based lubes to latex condoms on sex toys or toys that are made of latex.

Silicone-based lubes are a newer form of lubrication. They have become quite popular since they are safe to use with all condoms and any latex products. Silicone-based lubes are also longer lasting than water-based lubes. However, they can be a bit harder to wash off and some women report irritation if the silicone lube is left on for too long. One main drawback is that they can cause damage to sex toys that are made of silicone. Using a condom with water-based lube instead of silicone-based lube may help protect the toy from breaking down.

In the past, most lubes that were made specifically for lubrication during intercourse were available only through the mail or adult novelty stores. Now many drug stores and retailers
carry several kinds of lube. For you and your partner's new adventures in anal sex, experimenting with different types and brands of lube could be pleasurable, playful, and educational. As a precaution, especially if your skin is sensitive, you can test a small portion of the lube on your inner arm or thigh first at least the day before actually using it to make sure you aren't allergic to that particular brand. Also, thoroughly wash all toys with warm water and soap after anal sex, especially before using them for vaginal penetration, due to the risk of bacterial infection.

For more information about anal sex, check out The Ultimate Guide to Anal Sex for Women by Tristan Taormino, as well as Jack Morin's book, Anal Pleasure and Health.

Alice!
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