Dear Alice,

What are anal beads and how do you use them?

Answer

Dear Reader,

Anal beads are a type of sex toy for both men and women to use when alone or with a partner. This toy is a good introduction to anal sex for beginners. Typically, anal beads are smooth, round spheres made of silicone or plastic. Resembling a short strand of pearls, the beads are connected to one another by a piece of nylon cord or other type of strong rope-like material, with a ring or some other type of handle at one end. Some anal beads feel soft to the touch, while others are firm and textured. The beads are inserted gently one bead at a time into a person's anus. At the moment of orgasm (or at other times), they are pulled out by the ring or handle. Another version of anal beads is similar to a dildo made of plastic or rubber where the shaft is a series of round spheres.

Anal beads are available in various sizes. Some people especially beginners use smaller beads at first. Others find that larger beads heighten the level of arousal and intensity. Since the outer sphincter of the anus has many nerve endings, the sensations produced by the movement of anal beads can cause intense arousal. Once inside, the inner sphincter responds to pressure that the beads depending on the size may create.

Some people experience pleasure during insertion. Others enjoy the sensation of the beads being pulled out when reaching orgasm as they can enhance climax. Some folks are able to orgasm exclusively from anal stimulation. Others, however, are more likely to orgasm when the anus and genitals are aroused simultaneously.

Relaxation and lube are two important ingredients in any type of anal sex. This minimizes or prevents the possibility of tearing the thin lining of the rectum. It also makes insertion easier and more comfortable. Taking a warm bath can help relax the muscles in the anus, too.

Important tips to keep in mind include:

- choosing anal beads or other toys that are smooth in texture. These will not tear the lining of the rectum. Sometimes anal beads and other sex toys have a rough seam
around each bead. It's important to file these rough edges with an emery board before use.

- making sure that the cord is strong and that the beads are connected securely.
- placing the anal beads inside a condom (so that they are enclosed in a latex or polyurethane condom) before inserting them to keep them clean. It will also make it safer if you're sharing them with your partner. If you choose not to use a condom, consider buying silicone beads rather than plastic, which are porous and more likely to trap bacteria. Anal beads can be washed with mild soap and warm water and need to be completely dry before being put away.
- selecting anal sex toys that have a wide base or handle. This will help ensure that they remain partly outside of the anus at all times. Without this wide end, the toy can slip deep inside the rectum, making removal difficult.

For additional info about anal health and sex play, look for the books Anal Pleasure And Health by Jack Morin, Ph.D. and The Ultimate Guide To Anal Sex For Women by Tristan Taormino.

Alice!
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