

# Intimate Lubricants

Confused by the many choices of intimate lubricant? Looking for help in choosing the best lube for you? This guide will help you make the right choice. We'll explore the many varieties of lube - both general and specialised - highlighting the benefits and drawbacks of each.

## Sexual Lubricants

### Why Use a Sexual Lubricant?

Many people never use additional lubrication during sexual activity, whether solo or with a partner. If you are comfortable then there is no 'must' about using a lube. However, experience shows that most of the time using a lube will increase your enjoyment.

Here are some situations where a lube may be helpful...

- ♦ Women vary in their degree of vaginal lubrication. If you have a tendency to be dry, a lube can make all the difference. Also, personal lubrication tends to fall with age and also at certain times of the month.
- ♦ For anal sex, we strongly recommend a lube. Whilst the vagina naturally secretes moisture, the anus (male or female) does not. And with more sensitive tissue, anal sex can be unpleasant without good lubrication.
- ♦ Want to have sex in the bath or shower? The water will dilute your natural moisture and therefore sex can be 'rough'. Get the right lube and 'hey presto' the pleasure comes back.
- ♦ Using sex toys for fun? Frequently the material is not as slippery as human skin and a little lube really improves the experience.
- ♦ Engaging in solo sex - particularly male masturbation? A spot of lube on the hand or in the masturbator radically improves the sensation.
- ♦ Finally, many men don't 'last' as long as they (or their partner!) would like. Some specialised lubes contain constituents that slightly desensitise the penis, enabling sexual activity to be prolonged.

Above all these reasons, our own experience is that a good lube provides more than just lubrication - it improves the feeling and somehow makes sex seem 'smoother'. Try it and see!

## General Purpose Lubes

### Water-Based Lubricants

These form the majority of lubricants on the market - condom friendly and often formulated to mimic the pH of the human body. You'll find them in varying degrees of viscosity.

'Light' lubes tend to be thinner and offer a lower level of lubrication. Ideal for women who produce good amounts of self-lubrication and just want a 'top-up'. You will often find light lubes marketed as 'Womens Formula' or something similar.

'Gel' lubes are much thicker and last longer. Ideal for higher levels of lubrication. You need to experiment to find your preference.

There are many 'optional extras' added to waterbased lubes. A good example is aloe vera - used for centuries as a skin soother. There are many other additives such as ginseng which (in strong enough concentrations) may have other benefits.

A big advantage of waterbased lubes is that they are readily adsorbed by the body and are generally 'non-sticky' when they dry. However, they don't stay slippery as long as silicone lube formulations and so may not always be the best choice for anal sex or waterplay.

However, for most purposes a water-based lube will probably be your first choice.

### Silicone-Based Lubricants

Pharmaceutical grade silicone is a wonderful material as a base for lubes. It lasts for an incredibly long time and, since it doesn't dissolve in water, is ideal for use in the bath or shower.

Because of the intense lubrication it is also superb for anal play.

The drawback of silicone is that the body does not absorb it readily, so you will need to clean-up after yourself. We're not sure we like the idea of introducing silicone to the body on a regular basis, although every quality silicone lube uses pharmaceutical grade silicone.

Our suggestion is to reserve silicone-based lubes for water play and anal sex. Silicone lubes are also condom friendly. A word of caution - be careful if you are using silicone toys. Silicone lube can sometimes react with silicone toys and they may start to dissolve on the surface!

### 'Silk' Lubricants

More recently, some clever formulations have appeared which combine water and silicone components in one lube. The lube usually looks milky - because an emulsion of water and silicone has been created. Many people love this kind of lube - it is said to give a different feel and to provide just the right amount of slide and resistance to enhance the experience.

As always, try it out and see what suits you best. For waterplay and possibly anal sex we would still, on balance, recommend a pure silicone product.

### Petrolatum-Based Lubricants

Petrolatum or petroleum jelly is derived from mineral oil and has been used forever medicinally to sooth skin conditions. Thick 'gel' type lubes are often made from this material specifically for anal sex and often for the gay market.

The great thing about petrolatum-based lubes is that the lubrication simply lasts and lasts. And they don't dissolve in water. However, some people may be sensitive to the mineral oil and therefore not everyone will be happy with this type of lube. One important point is that petrolatum-based lubes are NOT condom compatible - they attack the rubber. Therefore be careful if you are using protection during sex that you don't also use this type of lube.

### Flavoured lubes

Many people love giving or receiving 'oral'. Most water and silicone based lubes taste pretty neutral so there is nothing to stop you engaging in oral sex with these products.

However, they certainly don't 'add' to the taste experience and petrolatum lubes can be downright horrible to taste.

If you are into 'oral' explore the wide variety of flavoured lubes available. For example, strawberry, peppermint, banana, watermelon and many other flavours can all be found.

Flavoured lubes are formulated using food-grade gelatine. Good products then use natural flavours and colours combined with some sweetener. Whilst not quite as nice as sucking an ice lolly, many flavoured lubes taste surprisingly good and certainly add to the sexual experience!

With this different formulation, the degree of lubrication is not as high as with other types, but the ability to lick, suck and swallow with abandon more than makes up for it!

## Special Lubes

### Reducing Penis Sensitivity

Reaching orgasm too quickly is an issue for many men - and so you will find some lubricants (also sprays and creams) that contain benzocaine or lidocaine. These are mild 'numbing' agents present in low concentrations.

If you've ever had an injection at the dentists then you've experienced the effect of benzocaine - but in much higher doses! In sprays and lubes the concentration is usually about 3%, which is just enough to reduce sensations for a period.

### Increasing Clitoral Sensitivity

Many women enjoy the ability to increase the sensitivity of their clitoris - which can result in faster, longer and more intense orgasms. You can buy a variety of creams and gels designed to achieve this. The active ingredients are usually menthol and/or L-arginine (an amino acid). There are many brands available - test them until you find one that suits you.

*This leaflet may be reproduced freely provided no alterations, deletions or additions are made.*