

GP CARE WAKEFIELD WOMEN'S HEALTH CLINICS

Vaginal pessary fitting clinic



You have been referred by your GP practice for an appointment to treat your vaginal prolapse with a pessary. This leaflet describes what happens during the appointment

Understanding Vaginal Prolapse and treatment with a Pessary

What is a prolapse?

A prolapse occurs when a woman's pelvic floor muscles become weakened or damaged, causing the pelvic organs to descend into the vagina. This is a common condition and can affect the bladder, bowel, or womb. While a prolapse is not life-threatening, it can cause significant discomfort and affect daily activities.

Several factors can contribute to pelvic floor weakness, including:

- Childbirth
- Heavy lifting and straining
- Chronic constipation
- Being overweight or obese
- Menopause and hormonal changes
- Symptoms of a Prolapse

If you have a prolapse, you may experience one or more of the following symptoms:

- A sensation of a lump or bulge in the vagina
- A dragging or heavy feeling in the lower abdomen
- Difficulty emptying the bladder or bowel
- Urinary incontinence (leakage of urine)
- Constipation or difficulty passing stool
- Discomfort or pain during sexual intercourse

Treatment options for a prolapse

Treatment is typically recommended if you experience symptoms that bother you.

There are several treatment options available, including:

- **Pelvic Floor Physiotherapy:** Exercises to strengthen the pelvic floor muscles and improve symptoms.
- **Surgical Treatment:** This includes vaginal repair surgery or, in some cases, a hysterectomy.
- **Vaginal Pessary:** A non-surgical option that provides support for the prolapsed organs.

This leaflet focuses on the vaginal pessary as a treatment option.

What is a Vaginal Pessary?

A vaginal pessary is a small medical device made of silicone that is inserted into the vagina to provide support for prolapsed organs. Pessaries come in different shapes and sizes. One common type is the Ring Pessary, which is recommended for many women.

Pessaries are especially useful for women who:

- Prefer a non-surgical approach.
- Have underlying health conditions that make surgery risky.
- Have not yet completed childbearing.

Please note: the person who fits your will tell you how often you will need your pessary changing.

How does a Pessary work?

The pessary sits inside the vagina and helps hold the prolapsed organs back in place. When fitted correctly, it should not be noticeable, and you should be able to continue with normal daily activities more comfortably.

What to expect with a Vaginal Pessary

Are there any risks?

While pessaries are generally safe, there are some risks and side effects to be aware of:

- Vaginal erosion or ulcers (reported in 1 in 6 women) – more common in postmenopausal women or those who do not have sexual intercourse.
- Vaginal discharge – an increase in vaginal secretions is normal, but unpleasant smelling or heavy discharge should be reported to your clinician.
- Mild vaginal bleeding – occasional spotting may occur, but persistent bleeding should be assessed.
- Bacterial vaginosis (BV) – an imbalance of vaginal bacteria causing a watery discharge with a fishy odour, easily treatable with antibiotics.
- Urinary incontinence – leakage of urine can sometimes occur with pessary use.
- Discomfort during intercourse – some women and their partners may feel the pessary during sex.



Routine check-ups and Pessary changes

To ensure the pessary remains effective and safe, it is essential to have it checked and changed every 3 to 6 months by a trained clinician. Regular follow-ups help prevent complications such as vaginal sores or infections.

You should contact your GP practice if:

- You experience discomfort with the pessary.
- You notice unusual bleeding or heavy discharge.
- You have trouble passing urine or having a bowel movement.

Can I have sexual intercourse with a Pessary in?

Yes, you can have sexual intercourse with a ring pessary in place.

However, in some cases women and their partners may be able to feel it, and occasionally, it may cause discomfort.

If this is an issue, speak to your clinician about possible adjustments or alternative pessary types.

How is a Pessary fitted?

A pessary is inserted through the vagina by a trained clinician. The procedure is straightforward and does not require anaesthetic.



At your appointment:

- Your clinician will assess your general health and symptoms.
- You will be asked to remove your lower clothing and lie on an examination couch.
- If you already have a pessary, it will be gently removed.
- A speculum may be used to examine the vagina for any abnormalities.
- The new pessary will be inserted using lubricating gel or oestrogen cream.
- After insertion, you may be asked to stand, sit, cough, walk, and pass urine to ensure comfort and correct positioning.
- A follow-up appointment will be arranged with GP Care Wakefield or your registered GP practice.
- If the pessary does not fit correctly or falls out, do not worry. You can dispose of it and contact your practice for another appointment.

Does Pessary insertion or removal hurt?

Most women describe the experience as uncomfortable but not painful. If you have concerns, discuss them with your clinician.



Booking and attending your appointment

Who runs the Pessary clinic?

The pessary clinic is run by trained clinicians who specialise in pessary fitting and management.

Booking an appointment with GP Care Wakefield

- Your GP will refer you to GP Care Wakefield for an appointment during evenings or weekends.
- You will receive a text or call confirming your referral has been received by GP Care Wakefield and when to expect us to get back in touch with you to book your fitting appointment.
- You will be contacted via your preferred communication method to confirm a booked appointment.
- If you have had a pessary fitted before, a new prescription will be generated by your GP practice. Please ensure you bring the newly prescribed device with you to your appointment. If this is your first fitting, you do not need to bring anything with you.

What happens if I cannot attend my appointment?

If you are unable to attend, please inform the clinic as soon as possible so your appointment can be offered to someone else.

Due to high demand, failing to attend without notice may mean you need a new referral from your GP.

Follow-up care and future appointments

After your appointment, a follow-up appointment will be scheduled in six weeks to assess the effectiveness of the pessary. This appointment will be arranged during your fitting with GP Care Wakefield.

For routine refits (normally every 3-6 months), contact your registered GP.

If you experience discomfort, urinary issues, or other concerns, contact your GP for advice.

We value your feedback on our IUS clinic services.

We value your feedback on our pessary clinic services. You can share your experience by scanning the QR code or visiting:
<https://forms.office.com/e/np8248pXti>.



Contact us:

If you need this leaflet in another format or wish to express a concern, make a complaint, or share appreciation, please visit our website or contact:

GP Care Wakefield Management Team

- **Phone:** 01924 677 000
- **Email:** wycb-wak.gpcwmanagement@nhs.net

For further information about the services GP Care Wakefield deliver for local patients, please visit:

<https://conexus-healthcare.org/patients/>