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You are entitled to a copy of any letter we write about you. Please ask if you want one when you come to the hospital.

If you are unhappy with the advice you have been given by your GP, consultant, or another healthcare professional, you may ask for a second (or further) opinion.

The evidence used in the preparation of this leaflet is available on request. Please email: [patient.information@salisbury.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@salisbury.nhs.uk) if you would like a reference list.

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## Using a Personal Vibrator (1 of 4)

This information sheet is intended for Spinally Injured patients only.

This leaflet is for guidance only. We recommend that you follow the instructions given by your clinician before using this equipment.

### What is a personal vibrator?

Following a spinal cord injury (SCI) the ability to ejaculate may be decreased. This can have an impact on fertility and other aspects of sexual behaviour.



A personal vibrator (PV) is a hand held device used to induce ejaculation in a non invasive way. It can also be called Transcutaneous Mechanical Nerve Stimulation (TMNS) or Penile Vibratory Stimulation (PVS).

A PV can also be used to retrieve sperm for assisted reproduction techniques or intimate relationships.

Regular usage of a PV may improve sperm quality and quantity to a limited degree.

The Spinal Centre recommends the following personal vibrators:

- Ferticare
- Viberecct.

### How does a personal vibrator achieve ejaculation

The PV works by employing vibration to the penis.

Different frequencies and amplitudes of vibration can be adjusted to suit your individual needs.

By applying adequate vibration to the penis, the PV promotes the ejaculatory reflex necessary for ejaculation.

The PV usually works best with SCI patients who have a lesion of T10 and above.

Other vibrating devices which are readily available for general use may not necessarily promote ejaculation.

**The Pressure Clinic**  
**Tel: 01722 429291**

## Do I need an assessment to use a personal vibrator?

Due to the risk of Autonomic Dysreflexia it is advisable to be assessed by a clinician when using a PV for the first time.

At the Spinal Centre your Consultant will assess and instruct you on how to use the device.

A Ferticare or Viberec PV will come with a user manual which must be followed in accordance with the recommended instructions from your spinal consultant/clinician. **You are at risk of serious health implications if you do not follow these guidelines.**

## How can I use a personal vibrator?

A PV has been specially designed for patients with neurological loss and can be used safely in the home setting.

If your hand function is limited your partner can be taught how to use the PV.

## How often can I use a personal vibrator?

It is recommended that a PV is used for a maximum of 3 minutes followed by a pause of 1 minute.

This can be repeated up to 6 times in one day, provided that there are no episodes of Autonomic Dysreflexia and that the penile skin surface is in a healthy condition and not showing signs of skin breakdown.

Do not use a PV more than once a week, unless advised otherwise. This will help prevent “exhaustion” of the ejaculatory reflex. Your spinal consultant/clinician will discuss with you how often you can use a PV safely.

## How soon can I expect ejaculation?

There is no simple answer. Some men can experience ejaculation immediately. Others find that ejaculation takes many practise sessions.

Follow the instructions given by your spinal consultant/clinician and the user manual. If you have difficulties ejaculating at the recommended settings, seek guidance from your spinal consultant/clinician before you try another setting.

## Are there any risks involved?

The use of a PV can cause potential side effects:

### Effects on skin

Bruising, bleeding or skin breakdown may occur depending on the condition of the skin of your penis.

It is important not to use a PV on inflamed or damaged areas of skin, and to seek medical assistance as soon as possible if problems occur.

When the skin has completely healed seek advice before using a PV again.

There are no latex properties in the manufacturing process of a Ferticare or Viberec PV.

## Autonomic Dysreflexia

Ejaculation can cause Autonomic Dysreflexia. If your level is T6 or above, you will be given instructions on how to minimise and manage Autonomic Dysreflexia episodes from your spinal consultant.

If you follow the instructions carefully, and take the necessary precautions to prevent Autonomic Dysreflexia the risks are minimised.

## Pain/increased spasm

If you feel pain or experience an increase in spasm when using a PV, discontinue use and seek medical advice.

Do not use a PV until the cause of the pain/increase in spasm has been established.

Pain/increased spasm may also be a result of the penile skin surface breaking down. Do not continue use until skin has completely healed. Experience will teach you to find the appropriate applied pressure to achieve ejaculation without any discomfort.

If pain/increase in spasm continues after taking these precautions, it is recommended that you seek medical advice before reusing a PV.

## When should I not use a personal vibrator?

If you are taking anti-coagulants e.g. warfarin, heparin, clexane it is advisable that you check with your spinal consultant before using the PV, due to the risks of bruising or skin damage.

When use of a PV triggers Autonomic Dysreflexia episodes seek medical advice.

If in doubt contact your spinal consultant/clinician or the Pressure Clinic.

## Do I have to buy a personal vibrator?

The Ferticare or Viberec Personal Vibrators are not available on prescription.

We strongly advise all patients to have an assessment with a clinician before purchasing this type of equipment. At the Spinal Centre the assessment is carried out by your consultant.

You can borrow a PV from the Pressure Clinic (when your consultant has authorised this). The PV is loaned for a period of one month at a time.

You will be asked to sign an agreement with regards to the care and maintenance and prompt return of the PV, and to finance any necessary repairs for damage caused to the equipment whilst in your possession.

There is a waiting list for this service and we loan our equipment for a maximum of 4 occasions. After 4 loans you are expected to obtain your own equipment. We will tell you how to do this.

If you do not adhere to agreement loan conditions, you will be removed from the waiting list.

If you have been assessed by the Spinal Consultant, but prefer to purchase your own device (not using the loan service) we can give you the necessary details.

If you need further advice or help on how to use your PV either during the trial period or afterwards, you are welcome to contact the Pressure Clinic.

## Cleaning and maintenance

Both the Ferticare and Viberec personal vibrator require minimal maintenance.

The outside casing of a PV can be cleaned with an alcohol dampened cloth or a household anti-bacterial wipe.

Do not use undiluted bleach on any components of a PV.

Depending on the device used, remove the applicator heads by unscrewing or unclipping and wash in warm soapy water only. Rinse well and dry thoroughly. Do not use alcohol based products or bleach on the applicators.

Do not submerge a PV in any type of fluid to clean it. You are putting yourself at risk of electrocution.

A PV should be stored in a dry place at room temperature. Avoid extreme hot or cold storage conditions.

Always ensure that the PV is fully charged, and is recharged after every use.

Do not use a PV while charging the device. Always turn off device before charging.

Fully charged batteries will allow approx 20 - 30 minutes minimum usage depending on the setting used and lifespan of battery.

To avoid the risk of electrocution, always use the supplied charger for the device.

To maintain the optimum battery lifespan of a PV, it is recommended that the power is left on and allowed to run down until completely empty. When the battery power has become empty, recharge the PV fully again.

This is known as “discharging” the internal battery and should be done on alternate months.

The internal batteries cannot be removed or replaced from the unit. Do not dispose of a PV in normal household waste collection.

Please contact your local waste authority regarding the disposal of Nickel Cadmium batteries and devices containing them.

## Further information

It is important that any concerns you may have regarding erectile dysfunction, as well as all other aspects of sexual function e.g. fertility issues, ejaculation etc are discussed with your consultant here at the Spinal Centre.

Remember - what may work for one person may not work for you.