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How to Clean Your Sex Toys Without Damaging Them, According to Experts

Yes, you should be cleaning them.

BY SOPHIE SAINT THOMAS. April 8, 2019



Boiling

One way to clean sex toys is to drop them in hot water. "As a general rule, if the toy is constructed from silicone, Pyrex, or stainless steel and it's not motorized, then its best to sterilize by submerging in boiling water for a few minutes," [Huizenga](#) explains. This is also Sweeney's preferred method of cleaning for glass, Pyrex, and steel. With some motorized silicone toys, such as a strap-on dildo that comes with an insertable bullet vibrator, you can just take out that part and let the hot water do its work. However, if the toy is a vibrator or boiling isn't your thing, there are other options.

Why should I clean my sex toys?

If an STI can be transmitted through sex, it can likely be transmitted through sex toys. Susan Bard, a New York City-based dermatologist, tells **Allure*, "Nearly all STIs are capable of being transmitted through sex toys, especially toys that are inserted into the body or make mucosal contact."

According to Robert Huizenga, author of *Sex, Lies & STDs: The Must Read Before You Swipe Right*, HPV is the most common STI transmitted through sex toy use with a partner, although herpes simplex virus (or HSV), chlamydia, and gonorrhea can also be spread. It's also technically possible to transmit HIV by sharing things like dildos and cock rings, although Huizenga says that's a pretty negligible risk.

Even if you're just using them on yourself during masturbation, you should get in the habit of properly cleaning your own sex toys. If they're not properly sanitized after use, people with vaginas run the risk of



bacterial vaginosis or UTIs, especially if they switch from anal to vaginal stimulation without proper sanitation. People with penises can run similar risks without proper sanitation.

And finally, leaving sex toys unwashed and covered in dried bodily fluids can degrade or discolor the toy. You're not just protecting yourself and your partner(s) by cleaning — you're also protecting your investment.

Whether it's a steel butt plug, a strap-on silicone dildo, vibrator, or glass anal beads, there is an extra level of risk when using them with a partner. If you're in a fluid-bonded relationship, meaning you know one another's STI status and don't use condoms, just clean the toys after use as you normally would. However, if you're using the same toy with multiple partners, or are sleeping with someone who you're not fluid-bonded with, you should implement safer sex practices.

Depending on your budget or what you and your partner(s) are comfortable with, either use a separate toy for each partner or use condoms. "To maintain the cleanliness of the toy it's best to cover insertive toys with a condom and switch out the condom when switching orifices," Bard says.

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