

## Genital desensitizing lube <sup>[1]</sup>

Dear Alice,

I've seen you have given so much great advice in the past I was hoping you could give me some. I always use a condom when I have sex. I don't seem to last as long as I want to. I was thinking of trying one of those gels or creams that make you last longer. Is this stuff safe to use with a condom? Could it possibly break down the condom, causing it to fail? Thanks for any help, Alice.

Safety-first

### Answer

Dear Safety-first,

The gels and creams you are referring to are desensitizing lubricants. They contain a mild anesthetic (7.5 percent benzocaine) that causes a temporary numbing sensation after being applied to the skin. The purpose of this desensitization is to help men to keep their erections and to postpone or prevent premature ejaculation (a.k.a., to last longer). However, since the penis has less sensation, sexual pleasure for some men could be reduced. Plus, if a condom is not worn when using these products, the gel or cream can rub off onto the other partner's vulva, anus, or mouth, diminishing sensation and pleasure for that person as well. And no, if a latex condom is worn when using desensitizing lubes, it won't disintegrate since they're water-soluble (not oil-based).

Being a quick fix (and ineffective for some men), desensitizing lubes don't provide a permanent solution. Instead, Alice recommends that you rethink what lasting longer means and that it has more to do with teaching your body a new way of responding. You can learn to slow down, to recognize the "point of no return" (the moment right before your orgasm is inevitable), to back away as you get closer to orgasm, and to postpone the inevitable to a more desirable time. The "Stop-Start" method and/or the "Squeeze" technique are two exercises to try. For details about them, read [Prolonging arousal/Lasting longer](#) <sup>[2]</sup> and [More about premature ejaculation](#) <sup>[3]</sup> in the *Go Ask Alice!* archives. Changing your masturbation pattern, such as by using a looser grip or your less dominant hand, could also help.

Once you can identify and become familiar with your usual steps leading to orgasm, then you

may find the various tips and exercises on how to delay orgasm more useful, relevant, and lasting for you than the lubes you've mentioned.

Alice!

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