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## It's a desert down there: Help for vaginal dryness <sup>[1]</sup>

Dear Alice,

My problem is about vaginal dryness. I am an otherwise healthy twenty-one-year-old female, but cannot seem to get wet enough for pleasurable sex with my husband. We both get sore afterwards and I feel like I am not "performing" much like I would imagine a man would feel if he couldn't get an erection. Here's the thing, my husband doesn't want me to use artificial lubricants. Honestly I don't either. Are there any alternatives to K-Y? Is dehydration or draining enough fluids a factor? Any info would be of much help. Thanks so much.

sahara

### **Answer**

Dear sahara,

Vaginal dryness can be caused by many factors:

- Not being aroused enough before sex, or not wanting to have sex
- Being penetrated before you're ready
- Feeling stressed
- Taking medications that are drying, including isotretinoin (brand name accutane, for the treatment of acne) and decongestants and antihistamines
- Using marijuana before and during sex — it can dehydrate
- Experiencing certain hormonal states or abnormalities that can change vaginal fluids — birth control pills, Depo-Provera, pregnancy, and breastfeeding can contribute to vaginal dryness in this way
- Having an infection
- Getting older and menopause

Vaginal dryness is one reason why some women have sex during their period — because the menstrual flow allows for "natural" lubrication.

What is it about lubes that you and your husband dislike? Is it because you think that you're supposed to produce enough of your own vaginal lubricant in the presence of the one you love or

are attracted to? Some women naturally make more of their own lube than others, and, as mentioned above, it's often situational. Needing to apply some extra lube from time to time does not mean that anything is wrong.

And, not all lubes are the same; some may work better for you than others. Effective water-based lubes [2] are available in drug stores and shops specializing in sex-related products. You and your husband can sample a variety of them as they usually make women wet, slippery, and juicy, allowing sex to be more comfortable and pleasurable for both partners.

A little dab could do ya!

Alice!

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