

### Amielle SM2100 Comfort Vaginal Dilators Set and Instructional DVD for Vaginismus

Owen Mumford Ltd, Woodstock, Oxfordshire, £53.99

[www.owenmumford.com](http://www.owenmumford.com)

### Femmax Vaginal Dilator Set

de Smitt Medical Systems, Bristol, £24.99

[www.femmaxonline.co.uk](http://www.femmaxonline.co.uk)

Vaginal dilators have been used in a variety of clinical situations for many years, including the treatment of vaginismus, and the prevention of vaginal adhesion and stenosis following radiation therapy (Murino *et al.* 2008). Specialist women's health physiotherapists may recommend the use of vaginal dilators as part of their management plan for patients who present with vulvodynia. Dilators desensitize the vaginal introitus, and allow women to regain confidence in engaging in sexual intercourse (Chalmers *et al.* 2016).

Two of the most commonly recommended products are the Amielle Comfort and Femmax vaginal dilators. Both sets can be obtained on prescription, or purchased privately by patients.

According to the manufacturer's literature, Amielle Comfort dilators have been designed for women experiencing vaginal discomfort and penetration problems as a result of vaginismus, dyspareunia, gynaecological surgery or trauma following childbirth. Each set contains five dilators that graduate in size from 15 to 35 mm in diameter. These are attached to a "twist and lock" handle, and are packaged in a zipped fabric pouch. The set includes a small bottle of Sylk vaginal lubricant (see above), a sheet of instructions and a short educational DVD. The Amielle Comfort dilator set can be purchased through the StressNoMore website ([www.stressnomore.co.uk](http://www.stressnomore.co.uk)).

Femmax vaginal dilators are marketed as being "perfect for use after pelvic surgery &

radiotherapy" (StressNoMore 2017), helping "to reduce discomfort during follow up examinations, further treatments and sexual intercourse" (FemmaxOnline 2013). The Femmax dilator set includes four graduated sizes, which again range from 15 to 35 mm in diameter. Unlike the Amielle Comfort dilators, the Femmax ones are all the same length (13 cm) and screw together in pairs, making a separate handle unnecessary. The set is available in either beige or pink, and fits into a small, discreet plastic box. Like the Amielle set, the Femmax one includes an educational DVD, a leaflet and two small sachets of water-based lubricant. In comparison to the Amielle Comfort dilators, the Femmax set is considerably cheaper, retailing at £24.99 on the StressNoMore website.

Although both sets of vaginal dilators are designed to treat the same conditions, there are some subtle differences between the two brands. The Amielle Comfort set offers the greatest variety of sizes (15, 20, 25, 30 and 35 mm in diameter), with each dilator becoming longer as the diameter increases (the longest being 16 cm in length). The Femmax set give less choice in terms of diameter (15, 20, 27 and 35 mm), but the standardized length of 13 cm may make the largest size seem less daunting when women see the dilators for the first time. The tip of the Amielle Comfort dilator is more pointed than the Femmax one, which may make the initial insertion more comfortable, particularly with regard to the larger sizes.

Both sets of dilators require some degree of dexterity to assemble. The Amielle Comfort handle is fiddly to fit and initially quite stiff, particularly for the mid-range-diameter dilators. The grey plastic handle is difficult to keep clean, especially if the lubricating gel transfers onto the handle during use, and becomes lodged between the attachment rings when using the mid-range sizes. The Femmax dilators attach easily, and become a sealed, double-ended unit. There are



no areas where lubricating gel could become trapped, and therefore, the Femmax set is easier to keep clean.

Aesthetically, the Femmax dilators are superior in both appearance and feel. Although not designed as sex toys, these look feminine and unobtrusive, and could be used during foreplay without appearing to be too “medical”. In contrast, the Amielle Comfort dilators are made from white plastic, and resemble a medical device when attached to the grey plastic handle. However, some women might find this look preferable, particularly if the thought of sexual intercourse provokes negative emotions.

Finally, the cost of purchasing a set of Femmax dilators is less than half that of the Amielle Comfort one. This difference may be partly because of the inclusion in the Amielle Comfort set of a bottle of Sylk lubricant, a product that retails at approximately £10, if purchased separately.

Clinically, I have not had any feedback regarding the Femmax dilators; however, my review of the Amielle Comfort set is based on patient experience. Of the two sets of vaginal dilators, I

believe that the Femmax one is the better product, particularly with regard to its ease of use, aesthetics and price.

**Rachel Bromley**

*Clinical Specialist Lead Physiotherapist for  
Women’s Health and Continence  
Nuffield Health  
Shrewsbury  
UK*

## References

- Chalmers K. J., Hutchinson M. R. & Moseley G. L. (2016) The role of physiotherapy in the management of vulvodinia. [Guest editorial.] *New Zealand Journal of Physiotherapy* **44** (3), 121–123.
- FemmaxOnline (2013) *Femmax Vaginal Dilator Set*. [WWW document.] URL <http://www.femmaxonline.co.uk/>
- Murino F., Bernorio R. & Palmiotto R. (2008) The use of Amielle vaginal trainers as adjuvant in the treatment of vestibulodynia: an observational multicentric study. *The Medscape Journal of Medicine* **10** (1): 23.
- StressNoMore (2017) *Femmax Vaginal Dilator Set*. [WWW document.] URL <https://www.stressnomore.co.uk/femmax-dilators-81061.html>