

What's in your nightstand? A variety of bedroom aids could be due for a natural update

SEXY TYPEWRITER, SPECIAL TO QMI AGENCY

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Coconut oil is a great option to use as a natural lubricant. (Shutterstock.com)

Sex may be the most natural thing in the world, but that doesn't mean that it's always great for the environment - or even your body.

Kimberley Sedgwick is a co-owner of the Red Tent Sisters, an ethical and eco-conscious sexual health boutique in Toronto and online (Ecosex.ca). She says that most traditional lubricants are loaded with parabens (a preservative linked to health concerns), sugar and glycerin (which can cause yeast infections). They are often petrochemical-based.

"Lubricant makes everything better," she says. "But sadly, most of the lubes you get in the drugstore" have a host of problematic ingredients."

The Red Tent Sisters carry a number of alternatives. For those with allergies and other sensitivities, Pjur (\$15, 30 ml) is a great choice. The German-made lubricant is pure silicone.

"Silicone is good (as a lubricant base) because it's considered hypoallergenic and it stays on the surface of your skin. It doesn't absorb," explains Sedgwick.

One brand, Hathor, makes products that are petroleum, glycerin and paraben-free. The sexy, slippery wares of the small, female-owned Vancouver-based company were recently featured on Oprah.

"I love the Hathor lubes," Sedgwick gushes. "They have their original unflavoured one which is my personal favourite. They also have two flavoured ones that are sweetened with Stevia as opposed to sugar." With ingredients like Jujube Zizyphus, Siberian Ginseng, cinnamon and tangerine, Hathor products sometimes sound good enough to eat.

Vanessa Farquharson, journalist and author of "Sleeping Naked is Green," is a big fan of organic coconut oil for many reasons. She uses it as deodorant, hair treatment and also as a personal lubricant.

"It smells great, it's edible, it has natural antibacterial properties and it gets very slippery!" Farquharson says. Just don't use it in conjunction with condoms. "I think honey can also be pretty fun in the bedroom -- and you can always get local, raw or organic varieties."

When it comes to condoms, there's no easy solution. Polyurethane condoms are not biodegradable. Some latex condoms will eventually biodegrade under perfect conditions, but the process takes years.

"We really like the Glyde brand," says Sedgwick. While no more biodegradable than the next condom, they're at least "ethically manufactured. The workers are paid a fair living wage and the company is careful where their rubber is sourced."

When it comes to toys, silicone dildos and vibrators are best. Look for rechargeable toys made by Lelo, Fun Factory, We Vibe and Happy Valley.

"I love the Happy Valley toys because they're hand-made in Peterborough in an old farm house and the owners are passionate about their work," says Sedgwick. "They have a lifetime warranty on their toys; definitely a good eco choice."

No electric plugs handy? There are also wind-up options available, like the toy by Earth Angel made out of recycled plastic. (Sexy camping trip, anyone?)

Some, quick naturally inspired bedroom tips from Sedgwick and Farquharson:

- Showering together is steamy
- Set the mood with music played on a wind-up or solar paneled radio
- Soy or beeswax candles are sexier than their petrochemical counterparts
- Bamboo sheets are sustainable and whisk away sweat
- Sleep naked

Sexy Typewriter blogs about her dating failures - online and otherwise - at Sexytypewriter.com.

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