

## Product reviews

### Uresta

Resilia Medical Solutions, Shediac, NB, Canada,  
£179.00

[www.uresta.uk](http://www.uresta.uk)

### Contiform

Contiform International Pty Ltd, Kingsgrove,  
NSW, Australia, £75.00

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

### Contrelle Activgard

CODAN Ltd, Wokingham, Berkshire, £64.80

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

This comparative review of three continence support products was conducted by three physiotherapists from a specialist pelvic health team.



Uresta, which is distributed by iMEDicare Ltd in the UK and Ireland, stops involuntary loss from the bladder by supporting the urethra. It is made from medical-grade plastic and is latex-free. This is a solid device that is inserted into the vagina. It consists of a handle at one end, a bell-shaped central portion and a tapered point.

Uresta can be used for up to 8 h a day. It is easy to handle and simple to insert into the vagina. Lubrication with a water-based gel is recommended prior to insertion. Two of the three reviewers described a sensation of bladder urgency after the initial insertion. Another felt some heaviness and discomfort after wearing the device for a number of hours. Collectively, we felt that the flow of urine was slower, but we were all able to empty our bladders comfortably and fully.

We had some misconceptions about this type of vaginal device, having previously thought that it might be uncomfortable to sit down once it was inserted. However, this was not the case, and we all agreed that Uresta was comfortable to wear.

Unlike the other vaginal devices that we tested (see below), this product cannot be used during menstruation.

Uresta can be recommended to patients in both National Health Service (NHS) and private settings. Although it was not available on NHS prescription at the time of writing, iMEDicare is hopeful that this will change in the near future.

A starter pack containing three sizes (five sizes are available in total), plus a discreet case for storing the device, retails for £179.00 (with VAT exemption). A therapist code is also provided in the manufacturer's leaflets that further reduces the cost to £139.00. Uresta should be replaced once a year, or when any defect appears. The cost of this product initially comes to £3.70 per week over the first year of use, but this falls to £2.90 when you order subsequent replacements. Its value for money depends on how often a patient uses the device.

Uresta is a product that we had not routinely been recommending in our current clinics; in fact, we wrongly believed that it had been discontinued. Given the outcome of our testing, it would certainly be something that we would suggest as an option for our patients.

According to the iMEDicare sales representative, Uresta cannot be used by women who have undergone mesh surgery. However, the product information leaflet states that it should not be used after recent vaginal surgery in general. This is an issue that needs to be clarified.

The stated aim of Contiform is “to prevent everyday personal wetness”. The device is described by the manufacturer as “softly contoured to be worn discreetly and comfortably inside the vagina to support the urethra and restore your body’s anatomy” (Contiform 2017). It is a soft, flexible and flattened ring-like insert with an elongated “beak”. The extended part of Contiform sits along the length of the posterior vaginal wall, while the shorter portion sits on the anterior part of the vaginal wall and supports the urethra.

This product was difficult to insert, and required a fair amount of dexterity to place it correctly and comfortably within the vagina. The manufacturers state in their literature that, “just like using tampons for the first time, [ . . . ] it may take a little practice to get used to” (Contiform 2010).

You are required to fold Contiform in on itself, holding it with one hand as you insert it into your vagina. It is a strange, mildly uncomfortable feeling to experience it “opening up” inside you. However, it is comfortable to wear once *in situ*. You also need to use a fragrance-free soap to clean the product before application. This is not something that everyone will have, but unlike the Contrelle Activgard and Uresta, this product does not need any lubricating gel to be applied prior to insertion. Despite this, we found that Contiform was messy and difficult to insert correctly the first time. Furthermore, the device becomes slippery with multiple attempts and

you can easily lose your grip on it, which would require starting the cleaning process all over again.

Removing the device was also messy and required dexterity. Contiform does come with a release ribbon, but removal is not easily implemented with the complex insertion method.

Therefore, both insertion and removal can be quite labour-intensive.

Some of the reviewers reported sensations of urgency while wearing the device, but there was no discomfort while passing urine. Contiform can be used during menstruation, but not with a tampon.

This product can be recommended to patients in both NHS and private settings, and is currently available on NHS prescription.

A starter pack containing three sizes retails for £75.00, and replacements are £39.50 each. If you wear Contiform daily, it will last for 30 days. Less-frequent use means that the pessary will last longer. A slit eventually develops in the device, and this is the signal to replace it. The initial cost of this product comes to £2.50 per wear if only one of the sizes is used. Once you have requested a replacement in the correct size, the cost reduces to £1.32. We did not test Contiform for long enough for the slit to extend to the collar, but we would assume that, with appropriate care, even if infrequent use prolonged the life of the device, it would provide a patient with 30 wears.

Given that we work in an NHS setting, this is the product that we have been recommending to our patients because it is available on prescription.

Contiform can be worn daily, and needs to be removed and cleaned at least once during a 24-h period. Unlike the other two products discussed here, this product is not recommended for patients with prolapse. However, a research paper that is available on the manufacturer’s website states that, if a patient can retain a tampon, then Contiform “may be of some use” in reducing the symptoms of stress urinary incontinence (SUI) (Allen *et al.* 2008).

The Contrelle Activgard pessary is inserted into the vagina, where it supports the neck of the bladder. It restores the voluntary control of the bladder that women with SUI lose because of the weakness in the muscles of their pelvic floor, allowing them to lead a more active life. The device resembles a parachute once it has been mounted on its applicator. It has a soft, white, canopy-like insert that is attached to strings at





either end that are knotted and wrapped around the applicator ready for insertion.

The Contrelle Activgard can be used for up to 16 h a day. It can also be used during menstruation as long as it is changed every 4–6 h.

As mentioned above, the device employs an applicator, and therefore, it is easier to insert and might be described by some as more hygienic than some of the other products discussed in this review. However, the need to soak and saturate the Contrelle Activgard in tap water prior to insertion did not appear to us to be very sanitary. Multiple squeezes are required to saturate the device before application so that it becomes a non-absorbent product once inside the vagina.

Getting the Contrelle Activgard onto the applicator was difficult. You require some dexterity because it is a tight fit to get the pre-knotted insert onto this part of the device. It can be inserted with some lubricating gel or hormonal cream. The insert was comfortable to wear, and easily removed by pulling on the strings. Passing urine was also comfortable, and no sensations of bladder urgency were reported by any of us.

This is a single-use device, but the applicator can be employed again if it is cleaned and taken care of correctly. The Contrelle Activgard is not flushable, and must be correctly disposed of with household waste.

The device can be recommended to patients in both NHS and private settings. However, it is not available on NHS prescription, and would need to be purchased privately.

The Contrelle Activgard is available in three different sizes, and retails at £64.80 (with VAT exemption) for a pack of 30 single-use inserts (i.e. £2.15 each). We consider this good value for money for patients who use this product sporadically.

A single-use product may be seen as wasteful in times when we are aware of how much we put in household waste and recycling. Thus, if a patient is using a continence support regularly, perhaps another device would be more appropriate.

All three products reviewed could be used by any patient who has symptoms of SUI, as well as those who wish to strengthen their pelvic floor muscles by exercising. All clinicians could recommend these products to patients whom they are treating for SUI.

We all agreed that, once *in situ*, all three of the vaginal inserts were comfortable to wear, and appeared to stand up well to the demands that we placed on these devices. However, we are not part of a patient population, and therefore, it is difficult to draw specific conclusions.

Each device was tested by performing skipping, jumping and star jumps with a full bladder. All of the reviewers had had normal vaginal deliveries, and none suffered from symptom-specific SUI. No SUI was demonstrated with any of the products, but we must take into account both our profession and understanding of how to perform such tasks. Therefore, we cannot say that this would be the case in a symptomatic patient.

Despite our initial preconceived ideas about Uresta, and the knowledge that we thought that we had about Contiform, the former was found to be superior. Uresta was the easiest to insert and remove, and we all agreed that these actions were particularly difficult to perform with Contiform. The Contrelle Activgard was tricky to insert, but easy to remove. We all agreed that you need to be quite dextrous in order to insert the Contrelle Activgard and Contiform.

The only negative feedback for Uresta is that the device cannot be used during menstruation. This is when many patients report feeling at their most vulnerable with regard to their SUI symptoms. However, this product can be used in the run-up to this time, and therefore, it may still be of real value to them. If used correctly, both Contiform and the Contrelle Activgard can be used during menstruation.

Which product offers the best value for money? This is a difficult question to answer, and one that depends on how often it would be used. As clinicians, we would want a patient to use

such devices as adjuncts to treatment, but many of these products are marketed as a daily option for SUI. The cost of each unit is based on the fact that, as a result of government tax allowances for medically related merchandise, most customers are exempt from paying VAT on incontinence products. Both the de Smit Medical and iMEDicare websites make this clear, and draw attention to the fact that customers should tick the box indicating that they are exempt from VAT at the checkout.

You are required to purchase a minimum of 30 Contrelle Activgard inserts in one transaction. Contiform is the cheapest option, and it is likely to last for 30 uses over any period of time as long as it is looked after properly.

However, while Uresta is the most-expensive product, it lasts for 1 year. Furthermore, it is certainly the easiest of the three to use, and therefore, compliance should be high. iMEDicare also offer a 30-day, money-back guarantee if Uresta

is not right for customers. We have failed to find any similar return policy for either of the other two products. Lastly, since Uresta lasts for a whole year, it also has environmental benefits.

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## **References**

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