

TEN THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT ERECTILE DYSFUNCTION

ERECTILE DYSFUNCTION (ED) IS A COMMON MEDICAL PROBLEM

Erectile dysfunction, or ED, is a medical condition. ED is the inability to achieve or sustain an erection suitable for sexual intercourse. This happens when there is not enough blood flow to the penis, preventing an erection. While it is more common in older men, ED can happen to men at almost any age. In fact, around half of men over 40 are likely to be affected by ED to some degree.

ED MOST OFTEN HAS A PHYSICAL CAUSE

Most cases of ED have physical causes, including heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, neurological problems, or chronic illnesses. ED is often the first sign of an underlying medical condition, so it's important for men experiencing ED to talk to a healthcare provider to see what might be causing it.

BUT THERE ARE EMOTIONAL CAUSES TOO

Sometimes, the cause of ED can be psychological. For example, anxiety, depression, relationship problems, or a fear of intimacy may be to blame.

LIFESTYLE CHOICES CAN PLAY A ROLE

In some cases, lifestyle choices can contribute to a man's ED. Drug abuse, alcoholism, smoking, and a sedentary lifestyle can all affect a man's ability to maintain an erection.

CHECK YOUR PRESCRIPTION

The source of your erection problem could be in your medicine cabinet. There are dozens of prescription medications that can contribute to ED, including antidepressants, antihistamines, drugs to treat high blood pressure, and more. A healthcare provider can help determine if your prescription is a problem and look for alternatives.

ED ISN'T ABOUT DESIRE

One persistent myth about ED is that it indicates a lack of desire. ED isn't the same as low libido, and it doesn't mean that a man isn't interested in sex or is not attracted to his partner.



ED DOESN'T JUST AFFECT MEN

ED can cause a man to withdraw from sex and his partner. A female partner may blame herself, thinking that she is no longer desirable. She may also blame her partner and suspect infidelity as the cause. Lack of communication about ED can be destructive for a couple—so talk about it with your partner.

THERE ARE OPTIONS

Whatever the cause of your ED, there are options available. In most cases, treating the underlying physical or psychological condition can help resolve the issue. But this should be left to a healthcare provider—alternative treatments sold online and elsewhere are at best ineffective and at worst dangerous.

ED DRUGS: DON'T BELIEVE THE HYPE

Prescription drugs to treat ED work to treat ED by increasing blood flow to the penis. That part is true. But those other things you may have heard—that they act as an aphrodisiac and cause immediate “super” erections? Or that they are usually used recreationally by men looking for partners outside his relationship? Not true.

THERE IS MORE TO SEXUAL PLEASURE THAN AN ERECTION

Remember, sexual satisfaction doesn't begin and end with a hard penis and penetrative intercourse. While that may be desirable, there are many other ways to please a partner and yourself. You and your partner can explore new ways to improve intimacy and find pleasure.



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