

ERECTILE DYSFUNCTION – SYMPTOMS, CAUSES AND FUNCTION

Erectile dysfunction (impotence) is the inability to obtain and maintain an erection sufficient for sexual intercourse. Occasional erectile problems are not necessarily cause for concern. But if erectile dysfunction is an ongoing problem, it can cause stress, affect self-confidence, and cause relationship problems. Problems getting and maintaining an erection can also be a sign of an underlying medical condition or heart disease risk factor that needs to be treated.

If you're concerned about erectile dysfunction, talk to your doctor — even if you're embarrassed. Sometimes, treating an underlying condition is enough to reverse erectile dysfunction. In other cases, medications or other direct treatments might be needed.

SYMPTOMS OF ERECTILE DYSFUNCTION

Erectile dysfunction symptoms might include persistent:

In some cases, a combination of physical and psychological problems can lead to erectile dysfunction. For example, a mild physical condition that slows sexual response can cause anxiety about maintaining an erection. The resulting anxiety can cause or exacerbate erectile dysfunction.

- Trouble keeping an erection
- Reduced sexual desire
- Trouble getting an erection

Causes

Male sexual arousal is a complex process involving the brain, hormones, emotions, nerves, muscles, and blood vessels. Erectile dysfunction can be caused by any of these problems. Similarly, stress and mental health problems can cause or exacerbate erectile dysfunction.

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Risk factors

As you age, erections may take longer and become less rigid. You may need more direct contact with your penis to obtain and maintain an erection.

Various risk factors can contribute to erectile dysfunction ,including:

- Tobacco use : Restricted blood flow to veins and arteries can lead to chronic health conditions that over time can lead to erectile dysfunction.
- Certain medical treatments, such as prostate surgery or radiation treatment for cancer
- Medications, including antidepressants, antihistamines and medications to treat high blood pressure, pain or prostate conditions
- Drug and alcohol use, especially if you are a long-time drug user or heavy drinker
- Psychological conditions, such as stress, anxiety or depression.

PREVENTION

- **Be physically active**

Physical activity increases blood flow throughout the body, including the penis. Consult your doctor before starting any new activity. Beginners should start slowly with simple activities such as regular walking or gardening. You can gradually work your way up to more difficult activities, such as brisk walking or swimming. Aim for at least 30 minutes of activity most days.

- **Maintain a healthy weight**

Maintaining a healthy weight can also help delay the onset of diabetes and lower blood pressure. Ask your doctor how to prevent diabetes, or how to treat it if you already have it. Check your blood pressure regularly.

- **Avoid using illegal drugs**

Illegal drug use can result in the inability to achieve or maintain an erection. For example, some illicit drugs can interfere with the experience of excitement and other sensations. Illicit drug use can mask other psychological, emotional, or physical factors that may contribute to ED.

