

Understanding Erectile Dysfunction



Erectile dysfunction (ED) is a problem getting an erection firm enough or keeping it long enough to have sex. The problem can happen to anyone with a penis at any age. But health problems that can lead to ED become more common with age. Up to half of people with a penis who are over age 40 have ED at some point.

Causes of ED

ED can have many causes. Most are physical. Some are emotional issues. Often, a combination of causes is involved. Causes of ED may include:

- Health conditions such as diabetes, hardening of the arteries, high blood pressure, heart disease, chronic kidney disease, seizures, stroke, or depression
- Low testosterone
- Smoking tobacco or marijuana
- Drinking too much alcohol
- Side effects from medicines
- Injuries to nerves or blood vessels
- Emotional issues, such as stress or relationship problems

ED can be treated



Prescription medicines for ED are available. These medicines often help. But depending on the cause of the ED, medicines may not be enough. In these cases, other treatment options are available. These include erectile aids and surgery. Talk with your healthcare provider about the treatments that are available and pick the one that's right for you. New treatments for ED are being studied. No matter what treatment you decide on, stay in touch with your healthcare provider. If your symptoms persist, your provider may be able to adjust your current treatment or try something new.

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