



Female sexual dysfunction:

Sexual dysfunction in women is a disorder that can take many forms and have many causes. It can occur before, during or even after sex. Many women experience problems with sexual function at some point, and some have difficulties throughout their lives. Female sexual dysfunction can occur at any stage of life.

Symptoms:

Symptoms vary from a woman to another but they can include:

- **Low sexual desire.** This most common of female sexual dysfunctions involves a lack of sexual interest and willingness to be sexual.
- **Sexual arousal disorder.** The desire for sex might be intact, but there is a difficulty with arousal or and inability to become aroused or maintain arousal during sexual activity.
- **Orgasmic disorder.** There is a persistent or recurrent difficulty in achieving orgasm after sufficient sexual arousal and ongoing stimulation.
- **Sexual pain disorder.** A pain associated with sexual stimulation or vaginal contact.

Causes:

- Blood flow disorders
- Some medications can have an effect on sexual function like antidepressants that reduce the sex drive or the ability to have an orgasm.
- Gynecologic conditions: Endometriosis, ovarian cysts, uterine fibroids and vaginitis can all cause pain during sex.
- Hormonal changes: Hormone imbalances may cause vaginal dryness or vaginal atrophy, making sex painful. Low estrogen levels can also reduce feeling in genitals. Menopause, surgery and pregnancy can affect hormone levels.

Diagnosis:

- **A pelvic exam.** During the exam, the doctor checks for physical changes that affect the sexual enjoyment, such as thinning of your genital tissues, decreased skin elasticity, scarring or pain.
- **Order blood tests.** Your doctor may recommend blood tests to check for underlying health conditions that might contribute to sexual dysfunction.

Treatment:



- **Counseling:** Talking with a mental health professional may help. You can work through emotional or psychological barriers to pleasurable sex.
- **Hormone therapy:** depending on your symptoms, your provider may recommend topical creams, vaginally administered medications or hormones taken orally or applied to your skin.
- **Pain management:** There are several approaches to reducing pain during intercourse. You can try different sexual positions, vaginal lubricants or relaxation techniques before sex

