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# Sex and Menopause: Treatment for Symptoms

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Some women have vaginal dryness when their bodies experience the [menopausal transition](#). This can make sex painful. Women may also experience a tightening of the vaginal opening, burning, itching, and dryness (called vaginal atrophy). Fortunately, there are options for women to address these issues. [Talk with your doctor](#), who can suggest treatment options.

## Sex is becoming painful: What can I do?

Pain during [sexual activity](#) is called dyspareunia. Like other symptoms of the menopausal transition, dyspareunia may be minor and not greatly affect a woman's quality of life. However, some women experience severe dyspareunia that prevents them from engaging in any sexual activity without pain.

Many find relief from vaginal dryness during sex by using a nonprescription, water-based lubricant, a variety of which can be found at most grocery and drug stores.

Other women try over-the-counter vaginal moisturizers, which are used regularly and not just during sex to replenish moisture and relieve dryness.

Your doctor might suggest prescription hormones. Local vaginal treatments (such as estrogen creams, rings, or tablets) are often used to treat this symptom. These treatments provide lower hormone doses to the rest of the body than a pill or patch.

The [U.S. Food and Drug Administration](#) has approved two nonhormone medications, called ospemifene and prasterone, to treat moderate to severe dyspareunia caused by vaginal changes that occur with menopause. Your doctor can tell you about the risks and benefits of these medications.



[Read and share this infographic](#) about staying healthy during and after menopause.

## What Are the Signs and Symptoms of Menopause?



Explore this [fact sheet](#) (PDF, 154KB) provided by the NIH-funded Study of Women's Health Across the Nation for more information on sexual functioning and vaginal Health.

Learn more about [menopause](#), and symptoms like [hot flashes](#) and [sleep problems](#). You can also visit [MyMenoPlan](#), an evidence-based tool developed by NIA-funded researchers, to learn about treatments and coping strategies and create a personalized plan.

### You may also be interested in

- Reading more about [sexuality and intimacy in older adults](#)
- Learning [how to talk with your doctor about sensitive issues](#)
- Finding [general information about menopause](#)

### For more information on sex and menopause

#### Office on Women's Health

Department of Health and Human Services

800-994-9662

[www.womenshealth.gov](http://www.womenshealth.gov)

#### American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

800-673-8444

[resources@acog.org](mailto:resources@acog.org)

[www.acog.org](http://www.acog.org)

**North American Menopause Society**

440-442-7550

[info@menopause.org](mailto:info@menopause.org)

[www.menopause.org](http://www.menopause.org)

**Services & Advocacy for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Transgender Elders (SAGE)**

212-741-2247

[info@sageusa.org](mailto:info@sageusa.org)

[www.sageusa.org](http://www.sageusa.org)

**Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States**

202-265-2405

[www.siecus.org](http://www.siecus.org)

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