

Common Causes of Erectile Problems—From the Simple to the Serious

It's every man's nightmare: waking up one day only to find that your usually reliable manhood isn't getting out of bed. Unfortunately, you're not dreaming. You have erectile dysfunction. But take a deep breath—you're gonna be fine.

Erectile problems are far from uncommon. As many as 30 million men report suffering from dysfunction, and it's an issue that impacts nearly three-quarters of men over the age of 65. It's also far from incurable. Every day, men deal with E.D. using various erectile dysfunction treatments and medications. E.D. is a sign of getting older, but it's not the end of the world or your sex life.

Are you suffering from erectile dysfunction? Maybe it's common among your family or friends, and you want to know the symptoms? Don't live in shame of erectile dysfunction and definitely don't just hope it goes away. There's a cause for every problem, but there's also a solution.

The Hard Truths About Erectile Problems

If your room is dirty, you clean it. When you get a cut, you put a bandaid over it. Many of life's problems come with a simple solution. Erectile dysfunction, unfortunately, isn't one of them.

First, let's clarify: erectile dysfunction is not just an inability to get hard, although that is one aspect. It could also be an inability to maintain an erection once you have one or just decreased desire for sexual activity. There are a myriad of factors that can cause erectile dysfunction: some of them are mental, others external, and some are symptoms of a different ailment altogether.

Having erectile dysfunction is not abnormal, especially for older men, but the notion that getting E.D. is "just a part of aging" is a myth. Erectile dysfunction is not inherent to getting older, so don't brush it off. Another common myth is that erectile dysfunction comes from the loss of your sex drive. This is untrue. You still have a libido, it's just tamed due to the frustration of having erectile dysfunction.

If, while reading this, you recognize some of these symptoms in your own life, seek out the advice of your doctor as soon as possible.

It's All in Your Head

Men's sexual arousal is a complicated process. Your member isn't powered simply by attraction; getting hard involves multiple layers of the body like your nerves and muscles. But it can even go deeper than that.

It's time to talk about feelings.

Attraction begins in the brain, with sexual excitement igniting here and working its way down. Emotions can do a number on your ability to feel sexually excited. Are you facing more pressure than usual at work? Are there changes in your family that have you feeling stressed or depressed? Perhaps your relationship isn't going the way you hoped it would? All of these feelings can be a contributing factor or cause of erectile dysfunction. Sometimes, your head just isn't in it.

You may also be experiencing a common phenomenon called sexual performance anxiety. This typically stems not from external sources but from a lack of confidence with yourself. A perceived inability to satisfy your partner or insecurity about the size of your penis can contribute to erectile dysfunction.

Mental health and self-esteem play a critical role in one's sexual wellbeing. If you think this may be the case, take these concerns to a mental health professional. Beware, however, that many of the same drugs that are prescribed to treat depression also list erectile dysfunction as a side-effect. Most antidepressants will affect your hormones to some degree, which could exacerbate the problem. Consult with your doctor to find the right prescription for you.

If you determine that stress or anxiety is the cause of your erectile dysfunction, take steps toward a healthier, stress-free lifestyle. Seek out counseling or therapy if you think those methods are right for you. Dealing with the parts of your life that stress you out or make you feel sexually embarrassed could be a prescription free way of curing your E.D.

Health Concerns

Armchair physicians have long dismissed erectile dysfunction as psychosomatic; simply a matter of not being attracted to your partner. As we've discussed, that can be true, but it's not always the case.

While erectile dysfunction in and of itself isn't a dangerous, life-threatening ailment, the causes underlying it very well could be. Erectile dysfunction can be, and often is, symptomatic of other

health conditions. Conditions like heart disease, diabetes, high cholesterol, and Parkinson's disease are just a few of the things that can cause E.D.

Erections depend on blood flowing to the penis. Diseases that inhibit blood flow like low blood pressure or hardened arteries can be direct causes of erectile dysfunction. Erectile dysfunction that isn't a result of outside factors like stress is usually linked to the heart. Cardiovascular disease that decreases or stems blood flow will usually cause erectile dysfunction.

If you have diabetes, be sure to keep your blood sugar levels in check. Unattended diabetes can lead to the development of neuropathy or nerve damage. Normally isolated to the hands or feet, neuropathy from diabetes can afflict the penis. Premature ejaculation can also be a side-effect or precursor to erectile dysfunction. This means that while you may be able to conjure an erection, you'll climax almost instantly. Often, solving E.D. will also solve premature ejaculating.

Funny as it sounds, doctors will often use the penis as a barometer of men's health. Problems with the penis such as erectile dysfunction or premature ejaculating are often traced back to more serious sources.

As a side note, erectile dysfunction can also be caused by exposure to radiation. If you're undergoing treatment for cancer, you could very well experience E.D. This is a unique situation, and one that should be discussed with your doctor.

Knowing the health risks that can come hand in hand with erectile dysfunction, it's important for you to be able to connect the dots. If you find yourself experiencing E.D. and other symptoms like increased fatigue and frequently needing to urinate, you might have Type 2 diabetes. Ailments like these often exist in a vast, interconnected web.

Your Diet and You

Smoking and use of drugs like cocaine, amphetamines, and even marijuana have a high correlation to erectile dysfunction. These substances impair the natural processes of the body like blood flow and brain activity. Any use of alcohol is likely to at least somewhat inhibit your sexual capabilities, although having a drink or two can also prevent heart disease, which itself is a factor of erectile dysfunction.

Erectile dysfunction can also be caused by sexually transmitted diseases like herpes. Unlike erectile dysfunction, herpes is not curable, though it can be dealt with.

Getting your testosterone levels checked may also prove to be revealing. The testosterone hormone plays a vital role in getting an erection, so low levels could easily be the reason behind E.D.

Some foods have been shown to aid in curing erectile dysfunction. Eat oysters, which are high in zinc. Consider introducing into your diet high-protein nuts like pistachios. There are also a litany of natural supplements that can help like ginseng or "horny goat weed", a comic name for the herb Epimedium.

Watch Your Weight

Again, some causes of erectile dysfunction come with the natural process of aging. As we get older, our metabolism slows, making it harder and harder to keep off the extra pounds.

Weight gain can dramatically increase the likelihood of being stricken with erectile dysfunction. Not only is obesity linked to heart disease and blood pressure, both contributing factors to E.D., but it also decreases men's testosterone levels. Most damaging of all, weight gain or obesity can cause erectile dysfunction simply because of the loss of confidence. Low self-esteem can deplete your ability to become sexually aroused.

Hand-in-hand with obesity comes a poor diet. Certain foods and drinks can contribute to erectile dysfunction, especially those with high fat and sugar content. Exercise regularly, especially low-intensity activities like yoga or jogging. Do muscle exercises that increase the strength of your pelvic floor. Regularly check your vascular health and blood flow.

You Have Options

The first step to dealing with erectile dysfunction is being open and honest about your condition with yourself, your doctor, and your partner. It seems daunting and humiliating to open up about your impotence to the people closest to you, but being open about your condition is the first step to combating it. Once you accept it, it's just another problem to take care of.

And remember: erectile dysfunction doesn't just impact you. Your inability to perform or get an erection will have an effect on your partner, potentially causing them to feel the same inadequacy that you do.

Erectile dysfunction can onset slowly. If you think you're showing symptoms, take preventative measures. Manage your weight and eating habits. Exercise often and stay away from tobacco, hard drugs, and limit your drinking.

Popular Treatments

Your doctor may provide you with medications proven to treat erectile dysfunction, Viagra and Cialis being the most common. Experts are up in the air on whether or not there is much of a difference between these two supplements. Regardless of personal preference, both Viagra and Cialis accomplish the same goal.

But new users of these drugs may ask: what precisely do they do?

First, you should understand the physics of getting an erection. An erection occurs when blood flows to the penis at six times the normal rate. This can happen in the midst of getting hot and heavy.

Viagra and Cialis are enzyme inhibitors. Enzymes are chemicals in the human body that cause reactions. Enzyme inhibitors, as you can guess, inhibit these reactions. Drugs like Viagra and Cialis create inhibitor events that allow for sustained erections by stifling the enzyme that allows the penis to go flaccid.

While these drugs do roughly the same thing, the effects can vary broadly. Viagra will take about 30 minutes to kick in and keep you hard for about two hours. Cialis will take two hours to start working, but it lasts up to 30 hours. This does not mean you will experience a 30-hour long erection. Simply that the period in which the drug will be effective could be up to 30 hours.

Drugs like Viagra and Cialis are widely available but, before you buy, here are some things to note: some users of Viagra and Cialis have reported nausea, impaired vision, and back pain. Confer with your doctor about the risks of taking these drugs and make sure your source is reputable before you buy them online.

Erectile dysfunction pumps also exist for those looking for a more hands-on approach to handling their E.D.. Pumps are a non-invasive and less expensive solution to erectile dysfunction. They also possess less risk than taking medical supplements.

Erectile Problems? Not Anymore.

By now, you should know all the signs of erectile dysfunction. While it may seem like a scary thing to face, know that you're not alone on this journey. Nearly three-quarters of men around the world experience symptoms of erectile dysfunction. And it's not just about age. The number of men under 35 experiencing E.D. has been growing in recent years.

If you think you may be suffering from erectile dysfunction, take these concerns to your doctor, and be open with your partner. For more information about men's health--be it sexual wellness, hair loss, or anything else--visit our site to get educated. We provide advice and facts about men's issues and offer tangible solutions.

Remember: erectile problems are not the end of your sex life. It's just a bump in the road.