CLINICA family health

Diabetes and Sexual Health for Men

Several factors can lead to sexual problems or concerns for men with diabetes. It is important to understand them so that you can work well with your care team to improve your sexual health.

Psychological, Behavioral and Emotional Factors

- Feeling down or stressed can interfere with normal sexual function. Misusing alcohol, smoking or using other drugs can also interfere.
- Lack of exercise and being overweight increase your chance of developing erectile dysfunction (ED—the inability to get and maintain penile erection sufficient for sexual intercourse).
- Concerns about sexual performance may lead to avoiding sexual intimacy.

Blood Glucose (BG) and Sexual Function

- Poorly-controlled BG levels can affect your energy, mood and thinking, reducing your interest in sexual intimacy or activity.

Low Testosterone

- This condition is more common in men with diabetes than in men without diabetes.
- Symptoms (what you experience) may include low energy, low desire for sex, ED, depressed mood and loss of muscle mass.

Damage to Nerves and Blood Vessels

- "Autonomic" nerves automatically regulate many functions in your body, including those related to having sex. Penile erection requires healthy blood flow.
- Poorly-controlled diabetes can damage autonomic nerves and the blood vessels in the penis, leading to ED.

Medications

- Commonly used medications may cause or contribute to erectile dysfunction (ED).

General Recommendations

- Talk with your sexual partner when you have concerns about intimacy and sexual performance. Your partner will not know what you enjoy or want unless you communicate it.
- Talk with your primary care clinician when you have concerns about intimacy and sexual performance. Do not stop taking medications or start taking supplements until you do.
- We can help you feel and function better. We focus on healthy eating and drinking, physical activity, immunizations, safe medication use, ways to monitor your health and change your behavior.

A healthy sexual relationship is an important part of life for most people. Do you have a question or concern to share with us? Write it here:

Reviewed By GVO October 2016

CLINICA family health

Diabetes and Sexual Health for Women

Several factors can lead to sexual problems or concerns for women with diabetes. It is important to understand them so that you can work well with your care team to improve your sexual health.

Psychological, Behavioral and Emotional Factors

- Feeling down or stressed can interfere with normal sexual function. Misusing alcohol, smoking or using other drugs can interfere, too.
- Lack of exercise and being overweight can reduce your interest in having sex or being sexually intimate.
- Concerns about sexual performance may lead to avoiding sexual intimacy.

Damage to Nerves and Blood Vessels

- "Autonomic" nerves automatically regulate many functions in your body, including those related to having sex. Sexual arousal, vaginal lubrication and orgasm all require healthy nerves and blood flow.
- Poorly-controlled diabetes can damage autonomic nerves and the blood vessels to the genitals and vagina, leading to vaginal dryness, decreased sensation and sexual dysfunction. These issues can be made worse by women who douche.

Blood Glucose (BG) and Sexual Function

- Poorly-controlled BG levels can affect your energy, mood and thinking, reducing your interest in sexual intimacy or activity.
- High BG levels increase your chance of developing a painful yeast infection.

Hormones

- Hormone levels change during the menstrual cycle, pregnancy and menopause. Hormones can alter BG levels.

Pregnancy

- Some birth control pills can increase BG levels. Sometimes they complicate other health problems such as high blood pressure.
- If you are okay with becoming pregnant, work closely with your health care team to get your BG under control *before* you are pregnant.

Medications

- Commonly used medications may cause or contribute to sexual dysfunction.

General Recommendations

- Talk with your sexual partner when you have concerns about intimacy and sexual performance. Your partner will not know what you enjoy or want unless you communicate it.
- Talk with your primary care clinician when you have concerns about intimacy and sexual performance. Do not stop taking medications or start taking supplements until you do.
- We can help you feel and function better. We focus on healthy eating and drinking, physical activity, immunizations, safe medication use, ways to monitor your health and change your behavior.

A healthy sexual relationship is an important part of life for most people. Do you have a question or concern to share with us? Write it here:

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