

Treating Erectile Dysfunction

Medical Options

Urology Care
FOUNDATION™
*The Official Foundation of the
 American Urological Association*

WHAT IS ERECTILE DYSFUNCTION (ED)?

About one half of American men over age 40 have erection problems. Most men have problems with erections from time to time. But some men have erectile dysfunction, or ED. When you have ED, it is hard to get or keep an erection that's firm enough for sex.

WHAT CAUSES ED?

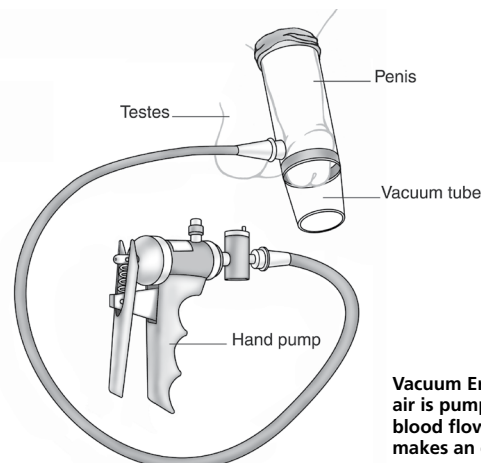
While ED becomes more common as men age, growing old is not the cause of the problem. ED can result from health or emotional problems, or from both combined. ED can be an early sign of a more serious health problem. Finding and treating the cause(s) of your ED can improve your overall health and well-being.

HOW IS ED TREATED?

To improve erection problems, your health care provider may need to treat the root causes. Your provider may ask you to change certain habits, such as stopping smoking, drug or alcohol use. Treating emotional problems, such as relationship conflicts, depression or performance anxiety can also help. Cutting back on or changing certain meds can often improve ED. Do not stop taking your medicine or change any meds without talking to your health care provider first. If a blood test shows low testosterone levels (low T), testosterone replacement therapy (TRT) may help. However, if a blood test shows you have normal testosterone levels, adding TRT will not help your erection problems.

WHAT MEDICAL TREATMENTS ARE AVAILABLE FOR ED?

- Oral drugs, known as PDE-5 inhibitors (phosphodiesterase type 5 inhibitors). These medications relax muscle cells in the penis and increase blood flow. This creates a more rigid erection. (These are the drugs you see often on TV and internet ads.) Ask your health care provider if these drugs are right for you. PDE-5 inhibitors treat ED in men only. Women or children should not take them. Men who do not have ED should not use these drugs, either.
- A vacuum erection device pulls blood into the penis, causing an erection. An elastic ring is then slipped onto the base of the penis. This holds the blood in the penis (and keeps it hard) for up to 30 minutes. This therapy works for most men with ED.



Vacuum Erection Device: When air is pumped out of the tube, blood flows into the penis and makes an erection.

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- Self-injection therapy. By injecting medication into the penis with a very fine needle, an erection is created.
- Intraurethral therapy. Patients place a tiny medicated pellet of the drug alprostadil into their urethra. (The urethra is the tube that carries urine out of the body). This causes an erection.

Ask your doctor which treatment is right for you. Dietary supplements (often called “herbal remedies”) for ED are popular but may not be safe or even work. Unlike prescription drugs, they do not have to be proven to work. Check with your health care provider before you take any supplements or medicine to treat your ED.

The good news for many men is that ED can be treated, safely and effectively. If you have ED, there is hope. There is help. Talk to your healthcare provider to see what is best for you.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER

- What is ED?
- What causes ED?
- Can ED be prevented?
- Can you help me or do I need to see a specialist in ED? If so, how can I find the right one for me?
- Will I need to have tests to find out what is causing my ED?
- Would you explain each test and why you are recommending them?
- What types of treatment are available for ED?
- Are there side effects from treatment?
- What are the pros and cons of each type of treatment?
- What treatment do you recommend for me and why?
- What happens if the first treatment doesn't help?
- Are there any lifestyle changes I can make that could help my symptoms?

When used correctly, oral drugs (PDE-5 inhibitors) work in 7 out of every 10 men with ED, and in patients of any age or race.

RESOURCES

American Association of Sexuality Educators, Counselors, and Therapists

Find a certified sex therapist/counselor near you www.aasect.org, click on “Locate a Professional”

Frank Talk

Peer support to help men deal with ED
www.FrankTalk.org

Hormone Health Network

In English: www.hormone.org/diseases-and-conditions/mens-health/erectile-dysfunction

In Spanish: www.hormone.org/audiencias/pacientes-y-cuidadores/preguntas-y-respuestas/2012/erectile-dysfunction

National Kidney and Urologic Diseases Information Clearinghouse (NKUDIC)

In English: <http://kidney.niddk.nih.gov/KUDiseases/pubs/ED/index.aspx>

In Spanish: <http://kidney.niddk.nih.gov/Spanish/pubs/ED/index.aspx>

Sexual Medicine Society of North America

www.sexhealthmatters.org

Urology Care Foundation

UrologyHealth.org

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