



# Sexual Dysfunction and Diabetes

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# Parental Guidance / Content warning

- This tweetorial does cover some subjects that may not be suitable for our younger T1 Warriors
- We will be discussing some sensitive and intimate subjects that not all may not want to discuss but please feel free just to watch if you wish





# Topics we will cover

- What is sexual dysfunction?
- Female sexual dysfunction
  - Loss of Libido
  - Vaginal discomfort including dryness
  - Menopause
- Male sexual dysfunction
  - Loss of Libido
  - Erectile dysfunction
- Hypos during intimacy

# What does sexual dysfunction mean?

- Sexual dysfunction occurs when you have a problem that prevents you from wanting or enjoying sexual activity. It can happen anytime.
- Men and women of all ages experience sexual dysfunction, although the chances increase as you age.
- Stress is a common cause of sexual dysfunction.
- Other causes include:
  - sexual trauma
  - psychological issues
  - diabetes
  - heart disease or other medical conditions
  - drug use
  - alcohol use
  - certain medications

# Female Sexual Dysfunction (FSD)

There is limited information available about FSD

However it can affect quality of life, physical and emotional health, and deserves more attention in clinical practice.

- Loss or a decrease in libido
- Inadequate vaginal lubrication before and during intercourse
- Inability to achieve orgasm
- Inability to relax the vaginal muscle enough to allow intercourse
- Pain during intercourse
- Non-coital sexual pain disorder (recurrent or persistent genital pain induced by non-coital sexual stimulation)

# Treatments for Female Sexual Dysfunction

- **Personal lubricant**
- A common cause of FSD is vaginal dryness, personal lubricants can help with this. They are applied to the vulva or vagina before sex
- **Vaginal Moisturiser**
- These can provide relief for 2-3 days and may be preferred if vaginal dryness or itchiness is an ongoing problem and not just associated with sexual intercourse
- **PDE Inhibitors (eg Viagra/Cialis)**
- These have been shown to improve sexual arousal and ability to orgasm in some women however experience is limited. They can interact with some heart medicines so please check with your Doctor before taking them
- **Hormone replacement**
- **Sex Therapy – More about this in a moment**

# Menopause

- The menopause occurs when menstrual periods have stopped for 1 year
- “Going through the change” refers to the period leading up to the menopause
- The patterns of your periods may change as the female sex hormones involved in the production of the egg fluctuate and gradually decline
- Symptoms can include
  - Hot flushes and night sweats
    - Easy to confuse with hypo symptoms
  - Weight gain
  - Urinary and vaginal infections
  - Tiredness
  - Weight gain especially around the middle
  - Anxiety
  - Depression

# Menopause and diabetes

- Oestrogen and progestogen can influence how your body responds to insulin
- As oestrogen levels fall your body becomes less responsive to insulin which can increase insulin resistance
- So you may see your insulin requirements increase
- Fluctuating levels may cause swinging changes to your blood glucose

## • Treatment

- Oestrogen replacement only
  - This is suitable for women who have had a hysterectomy
  - Some evidence to show this can help with fluctuating blood glucose levels
- Oestrogen and progestogen combined replacement
- Please discuss these options with your GP



# Male Sexual Dysfunction (MSD)

Sexual dysfunction in men with diabetes is not just about erectile dysfunction but also includes local factors affecting the penis

- Peyronie's disease (bent erect penis) has a prevalence of 20% in PWD compared with 3% in the general population.
- Balanitis (swelling of the foreskin or head of the penis) occurs 16% of PWD and 6% in the general population
- Over 30% of people with phimosis (tight foreskin which can not be retracted) in urology clinics have diabetes

Penile fibrosis can also occur which happens if early morning erections cease.

# Treatments for Male Sexual Dysfunction

- There are many treatment options available depending on the cause of the MSD. The first step is to talk to a HCP as you may need some further tests to check hormone levels or a referral to a Urologist or a Urological Clinical Nurse Specialist
  - PDE Inhibitors (egViagra/Cialis)  
These can improve the strength of you erection however they can interact with some heart medicines so please check with your Doctor before taking them
  - Hormone replacement
  - Sex Therapy – More about this in a moment
  - Other options
    - Intracavernous injections
    - Vacuum erection devices
    - Surgical correction
    - Penile prothesis
  - These options will require advice from a Urologist and you will need a referral from your GP for these

# Hypos during intimacy

Sex may be considered as exercise, therefore it could cause or increase your risk of a hypo.

This risk may be further increased if you have been drinking alcohol

Try to check your blood glucose before you have sex.

Have a hypo treatment or snack close by so you can treat a hypo if you need to.

Some people with diabetes are anxious about having hypos and this is called hypo anxiety. Hypo anxiety can affect how you feel about sex.

# Why do people have sex therapy?

Lots of people have a problem with sex at some point in their life. Some people can help themselves and resolve the problems. However some people need additional support.

A sex therapist can help people with various sexual problems, including:

- Lack of desire
- Hypo anxiety during sexual activity
- Pain during sex
- Difficulty getting or keeping an erection
- Premature ejaculation or other ejaculation problems
- For more information, read about male sexual problems and female sexual problems

# Final messages

- Sexual dysfunction is probably the most embarrassing subject that people have to discuss with a health care professional
- Talking to someone is the hardest but the first step to getting the help you need
- You can talk to you GP, Pharmacist, Practice or any member of the Diabetes Team
- Please do check before buying over the counter medications as some can affect other conditions you may have
- Remember to talk to your partner as sexual dysfunction can lead to relationship difficulties, these can be avoided by talking

# NHS Websites for further information

- <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/sexual-health/female-sexual-problems/>
- <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/sexual-health/male-sexual-problems/>
- <https://www.nhs.uk/common-health-questions/sexual-health/what-does-a-sex-therapist-do/>