Identifying and treating sexual problems for men

Most men will occasionally experience sexual problems of one kind or another. In fact, a survey by the Canadian Male Sexual Health Council suggested that in the past year alone, one in three sexually active men have been affected by erectile dysfunction, sometimes called impotence. Additionally, one in four men reported experiencing anxiety about their sexual ability.



Men's sexual problems are frequently connected to performance anxiety, resulting from the misconception that all sexual activity must lead to intercourse, orgasm and ejaculation. When this expectation is unmet, many men consider the sexual act a failure. Fear of failure then frequently affects the next sexual act, resulting in a self-fulfilling prophecy of failure.

Remember that drugs and/or alcohol can have negative effects on sexual performance. If, however, you are not using drugs or alcohol, and your sexual problems have continued for a while, see your doctor.

Common sexual problems can include:

- **Erectile dysfunction.** This is an inability to have or maintain an erection.
- **Premature ejaculation.** This is an inability to delay orgasm and ejaculation. Consequently ejaculation may occur very early during sexual intercourse, leaving your partner dissatisfied.
- **Male orgasmic disorders.** This is the delay or absence of orgasm following what is typically a normal sexual excitation phase. As with other sexual disorders, it can have an onset later in life or have been in effect for the person's entire life, and it can manifest in specific situations or in almost all situations.
- **Lack of sexual desire.** This includes an absence or near absence of sexual fantasies.
- **Persistent erection.** Meaning an erection not associated with sexual desire.

If any of the above is troubling you on a frequent basis, talk to your doctor. And don’t be embarrassed—sexual problems are common and there are many solutions.

Start by talking to your doctor. Depending on your doctor’s initial diagnosis, consultation may be recommended with other professionals such as urologists, endocrinologists, neurologists, sex therapists, psychiatrists or marital counsellors. Call your doctor today. What have you got to lose?