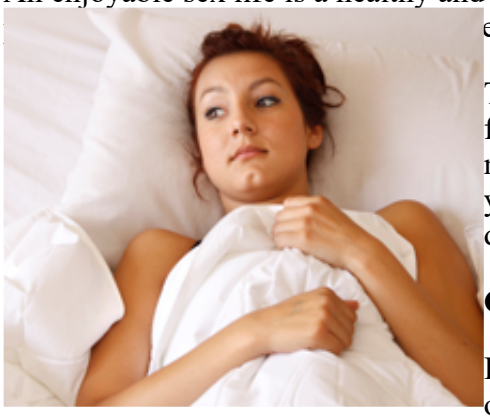
Identifying and treating sexual problems for women

An enjoyable sex life is a healthy and natural part of adulthood. However, most women have gone through



e or find intercourse uncomfortable.

There are many reasons for sexual problems—stress or lack of energy from our packed lives are the most common causes, although certainly not the only one. If sexual concerns are creating distress for you and your partner, try not to feel embarrassed and seek help from your doctor. Many successful therapies are available.

Common sexual problems

It is important to determine whether your sexual problems are of recent origin or whether they have always been present to some degree. This may help to identify potential causes that will, in turn, lead to the right solutions; some common complaints are:

- Lack of desire or timing of desire
- Inability to achieve orgasm
- Discomfort or pain during intercourse

Lack of desire

This is the most common sexual complaint in women and usually has a number of factors affecting it; consider the following:

- **Physical and emotional fatigue and loss of energy.** This is usually a temporary problem that eases when stresses are reduced. Try making dates with your partner for a night, a weekend or even just an afternoon away from home. Distance from family responsibilities can prove a powerful aphrodisiac.

- **Boredom.** When you have been with your partner for a long time, sex may start to feel as though it lacks the excitement you require for arousal. A little creative thinking can be a great cure.

- **Unresolved conflict with your partner.** If you hold onto anger or resentment, you may find it difficult to become sexually aroused. Talk to your doctor about a referral for therapy or marriage counselling.

- **Other medications or conditions.** Some can produce a side effect of reduced sexual desire. Discuss this with your doctor.

- **Never had desire.** These women may have psychological problems involving guilt or anxiety, sometimes stemming from abuse. Talk to your doctor about your concerns.

Inability to achieve orgasm

Only about 40 per cent of women reach orgasm during intercourse. Most women require additional stimulation. The following tips can help get you on the right track:

- **Know your needs yourself.** If you don’t know what you like, how can anyone else?

- **Discuss it with your partner.** It can be a difficult topic but don’t be afraid to ask your partner for what you need.

- **Consider exploring.** Try some different positions and sexual aids. This can also add some new fun and mystery to your sexual encounters.

- **Medical conditions or medications.** Some can affect genital arousal. Discuss this with your doctor if you suspect this may true in your case.

- **Menopause.** Menopause may affect genital sensitivity. Hormone replacement therapy or alternative medicines can be helpful. Talk to your doctor.

Discomfort or pain

Always talk to your doctor if sexual activity is causing discomfort or pain. Yeast or bladder infections can be at the root of discomfort as can a small pelvis. Menopause may result in decreased lubrication and vaginal dryness. Your doctor may recommend a lubricating gel or medication.

Sex is an important part of a full and rich life at all stages of adulthood. If something is preventing you from enjoying a fulfilling sex life, seek out further information or medical advice. You owe it to yourself.