

Impotence

This is the inability in men to be able to have sexual intercourse.

What to look for

The most obvious symptom is the failure to have an erection. However there are some other factors to consider –

- If your impotence appears only occasionally it is not usually a serious problem as this is quite common.
- Develops gradually and persistently, there is probably a physical cause
- Develops abruptly, but you still have early-morning erections and are able to have an erection while masturbating, the problem is likely to be psychological.

Impotence, the inability to attain or maintain an erection of the penis adequate for the sexual satisfaction of both partners, can be devastating to your self-esteem as well as your partners. It can affect nearly all males at some time or another.

Causes

There are a number of supposed causes of impotence in men.

The normal aging process can tend to slow a man's ability to sustain an erection. However, experts believe that the cause is more often physical.

The stiffness of an erection is caused by increased blood flow to the penis. Therefore, conditions that block the blood flow to the penis such as atherosclerosis or diabetes can hinder erections. Another vascular cause may be a faulty vein, which lets blood drain too quickly from the penis.

The nervous system has a controlling influence on the male erection; therefore certain prescription drugs which interfere with the nerves (or have this as a side effect) can cause impotence. Among the possible culprits are stimulants, sedatives, diuretics, antihistamines, and agents to treat high blood pressure, cancer, or depression. In addition, alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drugs, such as marijuana, may contribute to impotence.

With younger men, psychological problems are the likeliest reason for impotence.

Tension and [anxiety](#) may arise from poor communication with the sexual partner or a difference in sexual preferences. The sexual difficulties may also be linked to a low self-esteem, [depression](#), rejection by parents or peers, or sexual abuse in childhood.

Traditional Treatment

As men age it does take a little longer to become aroused, but if the problem you are having is persistent and severe, seek medical help.

There is a vacuum inflating device that is an option usually for elderly men and your doctor will inform you of the procedure involved.

Another treatment is the injection of testosterone but it is difficult to know how much as each man is different. Ask your doctor about this.

For blood-vessel problems, vascular surgery to open arteries leading to the penis benefits up to half the patients who opt for this treatment.

Men can opt for a penile implant however this should be after all else has failed.

If the cause is judged to be psychological, you could see a qualified counsellor to help you ascertain the underlying causes and help remedy your situation.

Alternative/Natural Treatments

Many alternative therapies promote the good health and relaxation needed for a satisfying sex life.

Aromatherapy – Essential oils of [clary](#), [sandalwood](#), and [ylang-ylang](#) encourage relaxation and feelings of sensuality. Add 2 drops of each to 4 tsp of massage oil or to a warm bath.

Chinese Herbs – Practitioners believe that too much anxiety can cause energy stagnation in the liver. Golden chamber, a combination of herbs, sometimes with cibot root added, is often prescribed.

Herbal Therapies – [Ginkgo](#), [Damiana](#), and [Ginseng](#) are sold in many formulations as sexual stimulants.

Personal Care

- Try to keep your focus and mind off ‘getting an erection’ while being intimate with your partner. Try to keep the pressure off yourself.
- Moderate exercise helps relax the body, give you more energy, and stimulate sexuality.
- Stress or anxiety diverts blood from the sexual organs. Try to relax

When to seek further professional advice

- If you are anxious about the problem
- Impotence persists