



Sexual Health and Diabetes

Diabetes can impact your sexual health. When issues are present, they can affect your emotional, physical, and mental well-being. Even though sex can be a sensitive topic, over half of people with diabetes experience sexual health issues. Talking with your provider about options can help.

By managing your diabetes, you can improve your sexual health.

Some factors that may contribute to sexual problems are:

Nerve and blood vessel damage	Hormonal changes	Uncontrolled diabetes
Depression and anxiety	Smoking	Alcohol abuse

Common Issues

- Erectile dysfunction (ED) is when a man can no longer have or keep an erection. More than half of men with diabetes will experience this issue. Good diabetes management may help prevent and address ED. Treatment options are available.
- Painful sex can sometimes occur due to vaginal dryness or nerve damage. Over-the-counter lubricants or prescribed vaginal estrogen creams can be beneficial.
- Low testosterone is twice as common in men with diabetes. It can lead to decreased interest in sex (low libido), reduced muscle mass, depressed mood, and a lack of energy. Testosterone levels can be checked. Common treatments include prescription medications and lifestyle changes, which include adequate sleep, a healthy diet, regular exercise, weight management, reducing stress, and avoiding alcohol and tobacco use.
- Decreased arousal and low libido can result from stress, nerve damage, decreased blood flow to the genitals, and some medications.

Talk to your provider about these and other factors that may affect sexual health.

Some medications have side effects that can decrease sexual desire and function. This includes medications for high blood pressure, heart disease, pain, depression, and allergies.



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Emotional Health

Emotional issues can interfere with sexual feelings and affect personal relationships. Managing stress, anxiety, and depression can help improve intimacy and closeness. Good communication with your partner can also help.

Common Infections

People with diabetes are more likely to experience infections, especially if their blood sugar levels are high. Keeping blood sugars close to target range reduces the risk of these infections.

- » Vaginal yeast infections may result in symptoms that include burning, itching, and thick, white discharge. Yeast infections are treated with over-the-counter creams or prescription medications.
- » Urinary tract infections (UTIs) can cause pain and burning when urinating as well as cloudy urine. A urine test can diagnose UTIs. See your provider if you have symptoms of a UTI.

Prevention and Management Tips What Can You Do?

- » Maintain healthy blood sugar, blood pressure, and cholesterol levels.
- » Get regular physical activity and manage your weight.
- » Get help for any emotional or mental health concerns.
- » Address excessive alcohol intake if you drink.
- » Quit tobacco if you smoke, use chewing tobacco, or vape.

Protect Yourself and Your Partner

Sexually transmitted infections may occur in people with or without diabetes. Get tested if you have concerns about possible exposure. [Mayo Clinic](#)

Talk About It

Sexual health is a sensitive topic, but is important. Talk to your provider if you have concerns.



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