

Sexuality And End Stage Renal Disease



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End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) can affect many areas of your life including your sexuality. Sexuality is more than the act of sexual intercourse. It also includes how you feel about yourself. Because of our sexuality, we can share our feelings with others and build relationships. ESRD has caused many changes in your body. You may experience disturbances in your sexuality and in your reproductive function.

Changes that **may** occur in men with ESRD include:

- decrease in libido
- abnormal ejaculation
- abnormal erection
- Impotence
- altered self-image

Women **may** experience:

- decreased sexual desire
- painful intercourse
- menstrual cycle disturbances
- altered self-image

Please note:

Women with ESRD can get pregnant. It is important to use some form of birth control. Talk to your healthcare team, if you are thinking of getting pregnant.

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Causes of sexual dysfunction

There are different reasons that you might have sexual dysfunction. Some explanations are listed below.

1. Physical Causes

a. Hormonal Imbalances

Men have imbalances of testosterone, estrogen and prolactin. This can cause lack of libido and/or abnormal erection.

Women may find intercourse painful. They may also have ovulation and menstrual changes.

b. Vascular Damage

Uremia, high blood pressure and diabetes can cause damage to blood vessels. Men who have vascular damage may have erectile dysfunction and impotence.

Uremia is a condition caused by the build-up of waste products in your blood.

c. Decreased Sensation

Uremia and diabetes can cause nerve damage (nerve numbness). This can lead to erectile dysfunction or delayed ejaculation in men.

2. Drug Effects

Some prescription drugs can cause loss of libido, impotence and delayed ejaculation. Recreational drugs (e.g. marijuana, cocaine and crack) may also affect your sexual functioning.

3. Other Causes

People with ESRD experience many changes in their lives. These may include:

- Financial problems because you are unable to work
- Restricted travel and social activities
- Decreased ability to enjoy your hobbies
- Low self-esteem because of your medical condition

Any of these situations or feelings can make you feel powerless. This can cause sexual dysfunction.

Please remember:

These sexual problems are common for people with ESRD. Talk about your concerns with your Nurse or Nephrologist.

Treatments

There are treatments for some causes of sexual dysfunction. Your nurse or nephrologist can help you decide on treatment.

Here is a list of some options.

1. Hormonal therapy
2. Penile implant surgery
3. Penile injection
4. External suction
5. Sexual counseling
6. Drug therapy
 - a. viagra
 - b. muse

If you have questions or would like to talk more about your sexuality, speak with your nurse or nephrologist.

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