

Erectile Dysfunction

By Dr. Fred Raleigh, Plus Magazine, Aug. 2006

Question: Within the last two years I began to develop what is now commonly referred to as erectile dysfunction (ED). At first it was a now and then situation and my wife was very understanding.

On the other hand I was not satisfied with my inability to perform and for me, my sexual life was very unfulfilling. Consequently I visited my local family physician and asked him to provide me with a prescription for Viagra™. He did give me a



prescription for 20 tablets.

When I got home I followed the doctor's directions and sure enough my "problem" seemed to be corrected. Yet, over the last few months the situation of ED is returning despite my using the pill as prescribed. Can you provide any further information or insight?

TD Oceano, CA

Answer: I can provide some insight and information that might help you during these trying times. Unfortunately you did not provide me with your age and/or if you have any underlying medical conditions that might be contributing to your problem. So I covered the problem in a bit more depth.

For starters erectile dysfunction or ED is not normal. You made the right decision by going to your doctor. However simply asking for a prescription to help out does not necessarily address any underlying condition that might be contributing to your ED.

Do you know that over 30 million men in America suffer from this condition which is defined as:

- an inability to achieve an erection,
- not maintain an erection for a sustained period of time or,
- an inconsistent ability to maintain an erection.



The old school of thought was that the problem of ED was all in the man's brain, this problem that is. And in part they are somewhat correct as we will see later on.

Many men, when they experience this problem begin to become nervous during situations when sexual performance may come into play. And of course stress is detrimental to the problem of ED.

For many years psychological problems were considered to be the causes of erectile dysfunction. Anxiety, fatigue, stress, and depression were thought to be the primary culprits. Yet, a recent report focusing on Men's Health found in Pharmacy Today, April 2006 has another story to tell regarding the



In the study being reported it was found that risk factors that lead to cardiovascular problems were apparently similar risk factors for men with erectile dysfunction.

The study evaluated over 9,000 men in a Prostate Cancer Prevention Trial and was published in the Journal of the American Medical Association in December of 2005. Of the men evaluated it was determined that ED was a harbinger of possible cardiovascular disease for some men. So in some cases prudence is warranted and a further visit to your physician may be essential to see if there are any detectable underlying causes. This of course would include not just a regular check-up but perhaps some medical screening tests as determined by you local family physician.

Fortunately ED has had much media attention over the last several years that more and more physicians are now attuned to ask questions and help you seek remedies for ED.

In most cases the cause of ED is easily identified and treated. Most causes are due to an injury such as spinal cord or brain injury; a disease such as hypertension, circulatory insufficiency, or diabetes, to name just a few; a surgical procedure such as having had your prostate removed and finally; substance use, which includes: alcohol, smoking, and certain medications.

Readers who want further information on this subject matter might want to try one of the following three web sites that are just loaded with useful information:

The Minnesota Men's Health at: <http://www.mmhc-online.com/articles/impotency.html>

The About Erectile Dysfunction site at: <http://www.about-erectile-dysfunction.com/> and lastly there is the Medicine on-line site at:

http://www.medicineonline.com/healthtopics/topics/Erectile_Dysfunction/

All men experience problems with ED from time to time. This is considered normal and further treatment is considered only when the problem remains persistent. In many cases certain simple lifestyle changes can and do help men to overcome ED just like certain lifestyle changes can help men avoid other diseases.

There are some practical things you can attempt to undertake to help out your situation. If after trying these you find that things are not any better then perhaps a more thorough evaluation by your doctor is warranted.

Many of these practical bits of advice will not new to you and I am sure you have heard them before either on the TV news or in the local paper.

First, start by limiting your use of alcohol or avoiding the agent all



together.

If you smoke you certainly should consider stopping. As among other things smoking leads to circulatory insufficiency a major factor in ED. Regular and routine cardiovascular exercise is another lifestyle change that you should consider. Regular exercise will also help to keep your weight down (as obesity is another factor contributing to ED), lower your blood pressure and improve your over all circulation. For aging men simply walking 5 days a week for 30-40 minutes will work wonders.

While you are looking at your current life check and see if there are any stress factors that you can reduce and if possible eliminate. And here comes one from



your mother – get a good nights sleep

Americans are on average - highly sleep deprived.

If there is anxiety and depression in your life you should deal with it rather than avoiding it or bottling up to possible causes. See therapist to help with these two problems is you cannot help yourself. Finally, as mentioned above get regular check-ups and medical screening as recommended by health professionals.

ED is not a curse to hide from. It is just another issue to deal with. There are many web sites and books available to assist you. You can even go to Amazon.com <http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/sitb-next/1572243864/104-8412969-8643118?redirect=true> and review a rather interesting book on the subject matter that retails for just over \$10.00

Hopefully you have some more information that will add to what you already may have read or sought out. Remember Rome was not built in a day and so improvements may come in small incremental steps.