

LOW sexual desire

Has your desire for sex and sexual intimacy gone into the tank? Are you having fewer thoughts about engaging in sexual intimacy with your partner? If so, you may be suffering from hypoactive sexual dysfunction. You might take comfort in knowing that this is a common problem that affects both men (35%) and women (45%). That's the bad news. It is a problem that most patients will not share with their partner or with their doctor. The good news is that help may be on the way and many who suffer from this common problem can be helped.

CAUSES OF LOW SEXUAL DESIRE

Low sexual desire is a very common sexual disorder. It occurs when one partner does not feel intimate or close to the other. Often the problem is the result of a diminished affection for the other partner, power struggles between the two partners and not having enough time to be alone in order to be intimate. Low desire can also be a result of a strict or religious background where sexual intimacy is often associated with scorn and negativity. The problem can also occur when there is a history of sexual trauma at an earlier age or sexual abuse by a parent or relative.

Lack of desire is also associated with medical conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, kidney disease, thyroid deficiency, and arthritis. Drug abuse and excessive alcohol consumption are culprits in causing decreased sexual desire. There are hundreds of medications that are associated with the side effect of inhibited sexual desire. These include anti-depressants, tranquilizers, and pain medications just to name a few. Hormone deficiency is another common culprit, such as decreased testosterone in men and decreased estrogen in women (the latter is common following menopause or surgical removal of the ovaries).

In addition to these physical causes of decreased sexual desire, there are psychological conditions such as depression, stress, fatigue, lack of sleep, and lifestyle problems such as career changes and marital discord that can be a primary cause or can contribute to the problem. Finally, there is a problem referred to as fear of failure that impacts both men and women. If a man has impotence, premature ejaculation, restarted ejaculation or a woman has painful intercourse or does not achieve an orgasm, they can lose interest because they don't want to experience repeated failure and embarrassment in the bedroom.

TREATMENT OF DECREASED SEXUAL DESIRE

If the problem is due to estrogen deficiency, then your doctor can simply order estrogen replacement therapy, which includes either oral medication or topical vaginal creams or suppositories that can restore the vaginal lining to a normal state.

If the problem of decreased libido is a side effect of medication, your doctor can reduce the dosage of your existing medication or change to another class of medication that is not associated with diminishing sexual desire.



Wellbutrin has been reported to improve symptoms of low sexual desire in women. The reports are that nearly a third of women will experience a doubling of their interest in sexual activity after using Wellbutrin. Although Wellbutrin is an anti-depressant, the drug was shown to be effective in women without depression and only complaining of decreased sexual desire.

Psychotherapy has also been shown to be helpful in managing low sexual desire. For women who are in a stable relationship, the therapist explores problems with communication between the partners or provides advice and education to enhance sexual stimulation by the woman's partner.

WHEN TO CALL THE DOCTOR?

If you are not satisfied with your current level of sexual desire and intimacy and you find that the remedies suggested in the tabloids and other self-help publications are not effective, you should consider consulting with your doctor to identify physical and/or psychological causes that are treatable.

BOTTOM LINE: Decreased sexual desire is a common condition in both men and women. Fortunately, most of those who suffer from decreased sexual desire can be helped. If you are one of these men or women, share this article with your partner and make an appointment to see your doctor.



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