

Treating Erectile Dysfunction: Medical Options

SEXUAL HEALTH SERIES

WHAT IS ERECTILE DYSFUNCTION?

Studies show that about one half of American men over age 40 have a problem getting or keeping an erection that's firm enough for sexual satisfaction. Most men have difficulties with erections from time to time. In some men it is a regular more severe problem known as erectile dysfunction or ED.

WHAT CAUSES ED?

While ED becomes more common as men age, growing old is not the cause of the problem. ED can be an early warning sign of a more serious illness.

ED can result from physical, medical or psychological factors, or a combination of factors. Diagnosing and treating the condition that causes ED can improve your overall well-being, as well as help restore your sexual health.

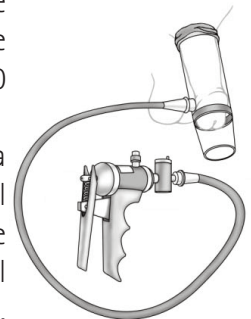
HOW IS ED TREATED?

To improve erectile function your doctor may treat underlying causes such as heart disease and diabetes. Changing certain habits, such as stopping drug or alcohol use, may also improve erectile function. Treating mental health problems, such as relationship conflicts, depression or performance anxiety can also help. If ED is a side effect of a prescribed medication you are taking, your doctor may be able to adjust the

dose of your medication or switch you to a different drug. Do not stop taking your medicine or change any medications without talking to your doctor first. If a blood test shows low testosterone levels, testosterone replacement therapy may help.

WHAT MEDICAL TREATMENTS ARE AVAILABLE FOR ED?

- **Oral medications** known as phosphodiesterase type 5 (PDE-5) inhibitors, relax muscle cells in the penis for better blood flow. This produces a rigid erection when sexual stimulation occurs. Ask your doctor if these medications are right for you. PDE-5 inhibitors are for treatment of ED in men only. Women or children should not take them. Men who do not have ED should not use these medications.
- The **vacuum erection device** draws blood into the penis, causing an erection to form. Once an erection occurs, an elastic ring at the base of the penis holds the blood in the penis for up to 30 minutes.
- **Self-injection therapy** uses a fine needle to place a small amount of medication into the base of the penis before sexual activity to produce an erection.



Vacuum Erection Device: When air is pumped out of the tube, blood flows into the penis and makes an erection.

FACT SHEET

AUA
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THE AMERICAN UROLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

To download a copy of this fact sheet go to www.UrologyHealth.org or contact:

American Urological Association Foundation
1000 Corporate Boulevard, Linthicum, MD 21090
Phone: 1-800-828-7866 or 410-689-3700

- With **intraurethral therapy**, a man inserts a tiny medicated pellet of alprostadil into his urethra to create an erection.

Ask your doctor which treatment is right for you. Popular natural or herbal medications and supplements claim to promote sexual health and improve erectile function. Check with your doctor before you take any

over-the-counter supplements or medications to treat your ED.

The good news for many men is that ED can be treated, safely and effectively. If you have ED, there is hope. There is help. Talk to your healthcare provider to see what is best for you.

This urologic information was provided to you by:

For more information about ED, please visit the AUA Foundation's website, www.UrologyHealth.org or call the National Urology Health Line at 1-800-828-7866 for assistance in English and Spanish.

The AUA Foundation is the world's leading non-profit urologic health foundation and the official foundation of the American Urological Association. Our mission is to promote health, provide hope and promise a future free from urologic diseases, including cancer.

This information is based on current medical and scientific knowledge and is not a tool for self-diagnosis or a substitute for professional medical advice. It is not to be used or relied on for that purpose. Please see your urologist or other healthcare provider regarding any health concerns and always consult a healthcare professional before you start or stop any treatments, including medications.

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