

# FREQUENTLY ASKED PATIENT QUESTIONS ABOUT ERECTILE DYSFUNCTION



## WHAT IS ED?

Erectile dysfunction (ED) is defined as the persistent inability to achieve or maintain a penile erection sufficient for satisfactory sexual performance.<sup>1</sup>

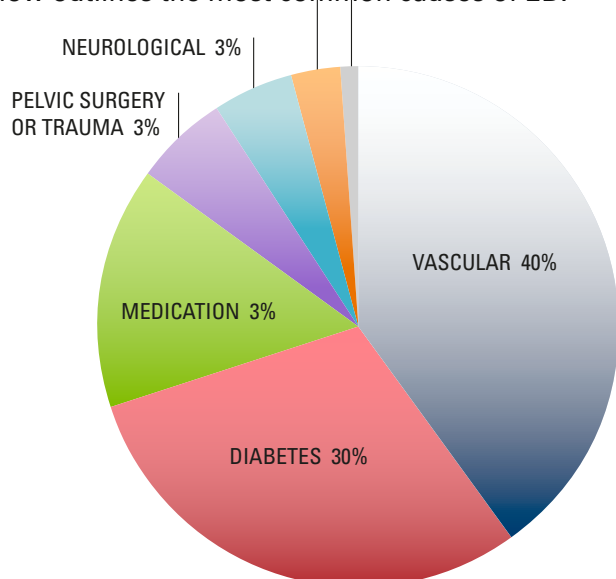
ED can limit your intimacy, affect your self-esteem, and impact your most important relationships. Beyond the physical manifestations, ED causes emotional damage and there is a strong link found between ED and depression.<sup>2</sup>

## HOW COMMON IS ED?

ED is a surprisingly common condition. For example, about 50 % of men over the age of 40 and 10 % of men below 40 are affected by ED.<sup>3</sup>

## WHAT CAUSES ED?

While there are real physical and psychological reasons for ED, there's no single cause. The chart below outlines the most common causes of ED.<sup>4</sup>



## HOW IS ED DIAGNOSED?

You may have to start the conversation with your doctor to get an answer to the question, "Do I have ED?". A personal history and physical exam set the groundwork for most conditions. Lab tests and other tests may identify a source such as diabetes, coronary artery disease or other conditions that affect the nerves and blood flow to the penis.

## IF I HAVE ED SYMPTOMS, COULD I HAVE HEART DISEASE?

Hardening of the arteries caused by plaque buildup – atherosclerosis – limits blood flow to various parts of the body. The arteries supplying blood to the penis are much smaller than the ones supplying blood to the heart. As a result, heart disease may first show itself as difficulty achieving an erection.<sup>5</sup>

## WHY DOES DIABETES CAUSE ED SYMPTOMS?

Diabetes damages the blood vessels and nerves that supply the penis with blood to form an erection. Endothelial dysfunction is the link between diabetes-induced ED and coronary artery disease.<sup>6</sup>

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## WHAT ARE SOME OF THE SIDE EFFECTS FROM PROSTATE CANCER TREATMENT?

The two side effects of a radical prostatectomy may be the loss of erections and bladder leakage. These side effects can occur, but there are treatment options available. Please consult your family physician/andrologist for the same. Also, after total removal of the prostate, there is no ejaculation, although there is the sensation of climax and orgasm.<sup>7</sup>

## WHEN CAN A MAN RESUME SEXUAL ACTIVITY AFTER PROSTATE CANCER TREATMENT?

If the cancer is detected early and patients are treated by an experienced surgeon using nerve-sparing techniques, then sexual activity may return to normal after surgery. This can take three to six months with continued improvement for two or three years.<sup>8</sup> If sexual activity does not return on its own, there are many different ways to support an active sex life (medications, pumps, injections and penile implants).

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## HOW IS ED TREATED?

ED treatment is available to all men with ED. Oral medications are a common first step, but they may not work for everyone. If men don't respond to oral medications, they may try other options such as pump devices, injections and penile implants.

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