

## Patient Information about Impotence

<http://www.urologychannel.com/patient-information-impotence/index.shtml>

Erectile dysfunction (ED), also called impotence, affects most men at some point during their lifetime. However, chronic impotence may indicate a medical condition, such as heart disease, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, kidney disease, or diabetes.

ED can affect intimate relationships and cause low self-esteem in men, as well as in their sexual partners. Smoking, alcohol abuse, and psychological factors, such as depression, stress, and anxiety, may increase the risk for erectile dysfunction. Common treatments for impotence include oral medications (e.g., sildenafil [Viagra<sup>®</sup>], tadalafil [Cialis<sup>®</sup>], vardenafil [Levitra<sup>®</sup>]), sex therapy, self-injections, vacuum devices, and in some cases, surgery.

Here are some questions to ask your doctor (e.g., urologist) about impotence. **Print this page**, check off the questions you would like answered, and bring it with you to your doctor's appointment. The more you and your partner know about erectile dysfunction, the easier it will be to develop and follow a successful treatment plan.

### Questions to Ask Your Doctor about Erectile Dysfunction (ED)

- Do you suspect that my or my partner's erectile dysfunction might be caused by an underlying medical condition or psychological disorder?  
Why or why not?
- What might be the cause for my or my partner's ability to achieve only brief or partial erections?
- Might difficulty achieving an erection be related to the normal aging process?
- How can my partner and I deal with the psychological effects of impotence?
- What types of tests will be performed to help determine if impotence is related to cardiovascular disease, kidney disease, diabetes, or another serious medical condition?
- Will an ED diagnosis include blood tests, imaging tests, nerve tests, and/or other diagnostic tests? If so, what do these tests involve?
- Do you recommend a medical specialist, such as a urologist, an endocrinologist, a psychiatrist, or a sex therapist?  
Why or why not?
- Might lifestyle changes, such as eating a healthier diet, avoiding alcohol, quitting smoking, exercising regularly, and getting enough sleep, be beneficial?  
Why or why not?

- If impotence is related to a treatable medical condition, will ED symptoms resolve with successful treatment for the underlying disorder?
- What types of ED treatment are available?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of each of these treatment options?
- What type of impotence treatment do you recommend? Why do you recommend this treatment?
- If this impotence treatment is not successful, what other options might you recommend?
- Might oral medication, such as sildenafil, tadalafil, or vardenafil be helpful? Why or why not?
- What are the common side effects associated with these medications?
- What symptoms are associated with serious side effects or complications?

**Telephone number to call** if severe drug side effects or complications develop:

- Might these medications interact with other medicines, dietary supplements, or foods? If so, which ones and what are the signs of this type of reaction?
- What should I or my partner do if a severe reaction occurs?

**Telephone number to call:**

- Might sex therapy be beneficial? Why or why not?
- Might other non-surgical treatments, such as self-injections, urethral suppositories, or vacuum devices, be helpful? Why or why not?
- Might surgery to treat impotence be necessary? Why or why not?
- What does surgical treatment for erectile dysfunction involve?
- What are the benefits, risks, and possible complications associated with this surgery?

- Might I or my partner benefit from naturopathic ED treatments? Why or why not?
  - What other treatments for erectile dysfunction are being studied?
  - Do you recommend participation in a clinical trial? Why or why not?
  - Can you recommend additional resources for information about impotence?
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**Notes/Additional Information**