



Women's Mid-Life Health Centre of Saskatchewan

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Frequently Asked Questions



I have no Interest in Sex What So Ever. However, My Partner Does and this is Becoming a Problem. Any Suggestions?

Sexual desire decreases naturally with age in both women and men. Women report lower desire in their 40s and 50s, but this varies between women. Menopause and aging does affect sexual function:

- Vaginal changes – falling estrogen levels often contribute to dryness, decreased lubrication, and painful intercourse, resulting in decreased interest in sexual activity.
- Body perception – age changes in body appearance can affect a woman's feelings about her attractiveness and desirability. A positive outlook about your body and body image positively affects sexual health.

Other factors that affect sexual function:

- Previous attitudes – whether you enjoy or do not enjoy sex will impact how you feel during menopause.
- Available partner – lack of a partner or a partner who has lost interest or ability to have sex will affect a woman's sexual desire.
- Health concerns – after surgery such as hysterectomy or mastectomy a woman may avoid sexual intimacy due to pain or feelings of being less attractive.
- Health conditions – sleep problems, depression, chronic pain, incontinence and fatigue interfere with desire. Stress and being "too busy" also decrease interest.
- Medications – some medicines used to treat depression or high blood pressure may interfere with sexual desire or intensity of orgasm or ability to achieve orgasm.
- Low androgen levels (primarily testosterone) – women also have testosterone levels that gradually decrease with age (not menopause) and may decrease desire. Surgical menopause (removal of the ovaries) or treatments that damage the ovaries can speed up the decline in testosterone levels.

What helps?

- Think positive thoughts about sex. A woman's brain is her most important sex organ, so fantasize a little! Take care of your emotional well being and your relationship.
- Stay sexually active. Regular sex with a partner or self-stimulation can help maintain vaginal elasticity and lubrication. Vaginal lubricants may be helpful such as O' My! (hemp oil base), or other water-based vaginal lubricants.
- Communicate with your partner. Let your partner know what works to help with stimulation and know that good quality sex takes more time.
- Schedule a physical exam and discussion with your health care provider. Causes of sexual problems can be identified through a physical exam and discussion. If vaginal dryness and painful intercourse are your problems, simple self-help strategies may not be enough. Some women will need assistance with vaginal hormone therapy, androgen therapy or a referral to a specialist in sex counselling.

The causes of sexual problems and the most favourable treatment will be different for every perimenopausal or post-menopausal woman. To stay vibrant, seek help to find your best course of action.

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