

Understanding & overcoming

SEXUAL DYSFUNCTION



Understanding SEXUAL HEALTH

ERECTILE
DYSFUNCTION

LOW
LIBIDO

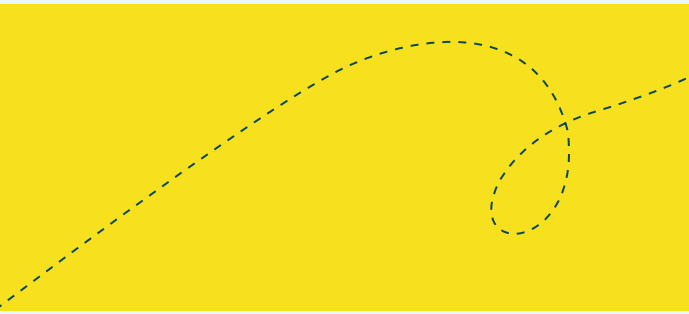
WHAT IS
ERECTILE
DYSFUNCTION (ED)?

WHAT IS
PREMATURE
EJACULATION?

common **SEXUAL**
DYSFUNCTION
issues in **MEN**

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Understanding Sexual Health^{1,2}



Sexual health is an essential aspect of overall well-being, encompassing physical, emotional, mental, and social dimensions. At its core, sexual health is not merely the absence of disease or dysfunction but a state of physical, emotional, and relational well-being that enables individuals to experience and express their sexuality in a positive and fulfilling manner.

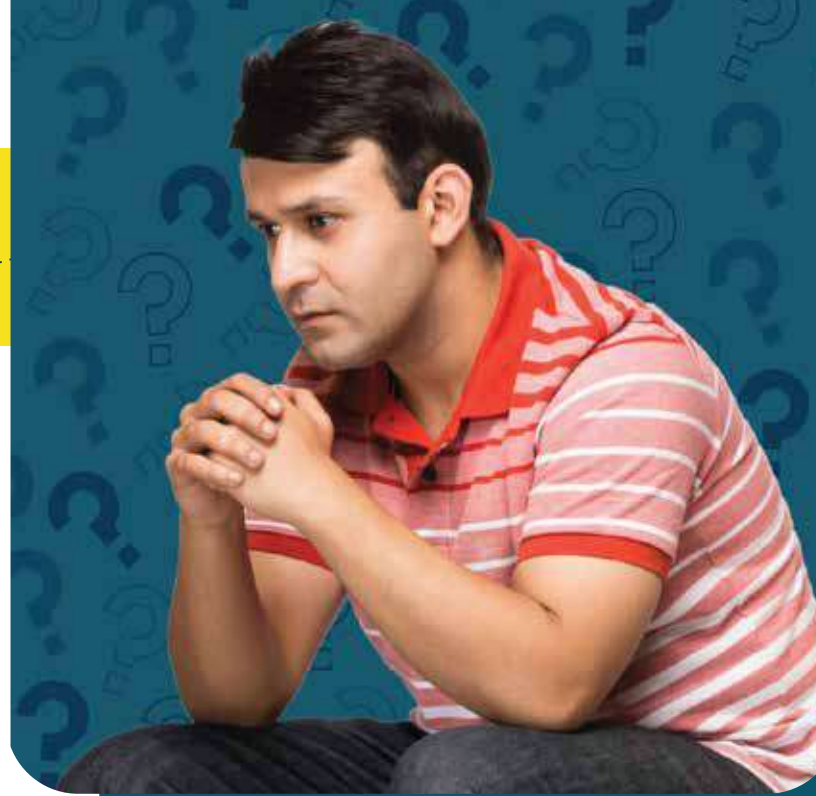
Sexual health involves the ability to engage in sexual activity comfortably and safely, maintain a positive body image, and communicate openly with partners about needs and desires. It also includes understanding and practising safe sex, managing sexual health concerns, and respecting one's own and others' boundaries and consent.



What is Sexual Dysfunction?³

Sexual dysfunction refers to a range of problems that can affect sexual desire, arousal, or performance, and can significantly impact an individual's quality of life and relationships. It encompasses difficulties experienced during any phase of the sexual response cycle: desire, arousal, orgasm, or resolution. Sexual dysfunction can affect both men and women and can be influenced by a combination of psychological, physiological, and relational factors.

Common Sexual Dysfunction Issues in Men^{3,4}



Erectile Dysfunction (ED):

ED is the inability to achieve or maintain an erection sufficient for satisfactory sexual performance. It can be caused by physical issues like cardiovascular disease and diabetes, or psychological factors such as stress and anxiety. Treatment typically involves medications, lifestyle changes, and sometimes medical devices or surgery.



Premature Ejaculation (PE):

PE is characterized by ejaculation that occurs sooner than desired, often before or shortly after penetration. Causes may include sensitivity issues or psychological factors like performance anxiety. Treatment options include behavioural techniques, medications such as local anaesthetic spray and antidepressants, and counselling.



Low Libido:

Low libido refers to a reduced interest in sexual activity. This condition can result from hormonal imbalances, chronic illnesses, or psychological issues like stress and depression. Addressing it often involves medical evaluation, hormone replacement therapy if needed, and psychological counselling.



Peyronie's Disease:

Peyronie's Disease is characterized by the formation of fibrous scar tissue inside the penis, leading to curvature and pain during erection. The exact cause is unclear but may involve trauma. Diagnosis typically involves physical examination and imaging, with treatment options including medications, injections, or surgery.



Delayed Ejaculation:

Delayed Ejaculation is when a man struggles to achieve ejaculation despite adequate sexual stimulation. It can be caused by neurological conditions or psychological issues like anxiety and depression. Treatment generally includes medical evaluation, psychological counselling, and potential medications or behavioural techniques.



Erectile Dysfunction (ED)



What is Erectile Dysfunction (ED)?⁵

Erectile Dysfunction is defined as the consistent inability to achieve or maintain an erection sufficient for satisfactory sexual performance. While occasional difficulty with erections can be normal, persistent ED requires attention.

Symptoms of ED include:



Trouble maintaining an erection during sexual activity.



Difficulty achieving an erection.



Psychological vs. Physical Causes⁶

Erectile Dysfunction can stem from a range of causes, both psychological and physical. Identifying the underlying cause is crucial for effective treatment.

Psychological Causes



Stress and Anxiety:

Worries about performance, financial issues, or other life stressors can affect sexual function.



Depression:

Mental health conditions like depression can reduce libido and interfere with achieving or maintaining an erection.



Relationship Issues:

Conflicts, lack of communication, or emotional distance with a partner can contribute to ED.



Performance Anxiety:

Fear of not meeting sexual expectations can exacerbate the problem, creating a cycle of anxiety and dysfunction.

Physical Causes

Cardiovascular Disease:

Conditions like high blood pressure and atherosclerosis can restrict blood flow to the penis, making erections difficult.



Diabetes:

High blood sugar levels can damage nerves and blood vessels, leading to ED.



Obesity:

Excess weight can contribute to hormonal imbalances and reduced blood flow.



Hormonal Imbalances:

Low testosterone levels or other hormonal issues can affect sexual function.



Neurological Disorders:

Conditions like Parkinson's disease or multiple sclerosis can impact nerve signals involved in erection.



Medications:

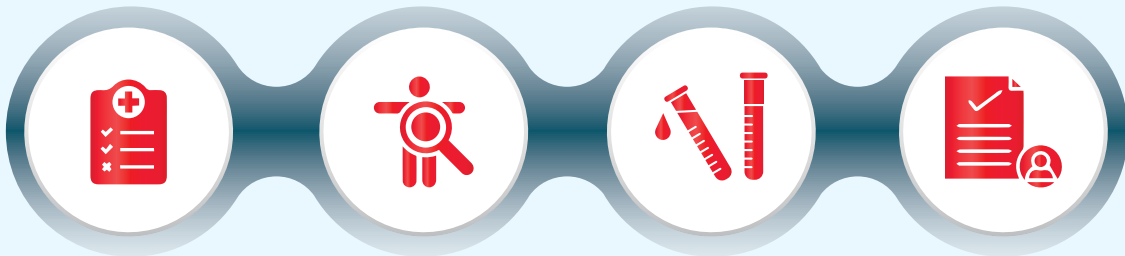
Certain drugs, including those for hypertension or depression, can have side effects that impact sexual performance.





Diagnosis and Assessment⁶

Accurate diagnosis is essential for effective treatment. A healthcare provider will typically conduct a thorough assessment to determine the cause of ED. The diagnosis of ED includes:



**Medical
History**

**Physical
Examination**

**Laboratory
Tests**

**Psychological
Evaluation**



Treatment Options for ED⁶

Treatment for Erectile Dysfunction depends on the underlying cause and may involve lifestyle changes, medication, therapy, or medical procedures.

»» Lifestyle Changes:



Diet and Exercise:

Improving diet, maintaining a healthy weight, and engaging in regular physical activity can enhance overall health and sexual function.



Quitting Smoking and Reducing Alcohol Consumption:

These changes can improve blood flow and reduce the risk of ED.



Managing Stress:

Techniques such as meditation, relaxation exercises, or counselling can help alleviate psychological factors.

● Medications:

Medications like phosphodiesterase type-5 inhibitors (PDE5i) and hormone therapies are prescribed to enhance blood flow to the penis and improve sexual health.

● Coping with ED⁶

Dealing with ED can be challenging, but there are strategies and resources available to help manage the condition and maintain a fulfilling sexual and emotional life:



Open Communication:

Talk to Your Partner: Openly discussing ED with your partner can reduce anxiety and enhance intimacy. Mutual support is crucial for managing the condition.

Professional Support:

Seek Medical Advice: Regular consultations with a healthcare provider can ensure appropriate treatment and management.



Self-Care and Lifestyle Adjustments:

Healthy Lifestyle Choices: Adopting a balanced diet, exercising regularly, and avoiding harmful habits can improve sexual health.

Education and Awareness:

Stay Informed: Learning about ED and treatment options can empower you to make informed decisions and alleviate concerns.



Dr. Ch Sree Harsha Varma





What was your biggest motivation to become a doctor?

I don't have any particular reason to become a doctor, and I believe that helping patients is an excellent profession. Once I started my MBBS, it became my passion.

Amongst all the available options, what made you choose the field of Urology/Endocrinology?

I chose endocrinology because it offers a unique blend of intellectual challenge, continuity of care, and the opportunity to make a significant impact on patients' quality of life. It is a predominantly

outpatient specialty with fewer emergencies compared to many others. This contributes to a better work-life balance, which is important for long-term career satisfaction and personal well-being.

Any fond memories you can share as a part of your Academic journey?

We have a lot of memories during our MBBS and PG days, and I can't pinpoint any such memory. So, the day I first went to the hospital and treated my patient was heartwarming, and the first night duty during my General Medicine is a good memory.

Within Urology/Endocrinology, what is your area of interest? Any specific reason?

In endocrinology, it covers endocrine glands, but I mainly focus on patients with type 2 diabetes, PCOD, and thyroid problems. So, diabetes is something we most commonly see in day-to-day patients, and that has become the focus of my treatment as well.

What has been the best achievement of your career so far?

Hopefully my achievements are yet to come but completing my DM and starting my practice here in Bhimavaram has been my biggest achievement so far.

Who has been your role model?

Regarding academics, then Endocrinology HOD, Dr. Dilip Kumar has been my role model, a well-known endocrinologist in Andhra Pradesh. He is an encyclopedia from which many aspiring endocrinologists have learned.

Can you share your hobbies?

As a doctor, whenever I get free time, I like to relax and spend time with my family, reading good books and scrolling on the internet.

Which is your favourite location/travel destination and why?

My favourite destination is Singapore, a beautiful location where we can do



various activities.

Which is your favourite cuisine?

I was brought up in Hyderabad, so Hyderabadi Biryani and South Indian cuisine are my favourites.

In this fast-paced life, how should one maintain a healthy lifestyle?

I believe having a good work-life balance is very important for everyone. Also, you should have a balance in your personal life, so spending time with your loved ones is important.



Premature Ejaculation (PE)



What is Premature Ejaculation⁷

Premature Ejaculation (PE) is a common sexual dysfunction characterized by ejaculation that occurs sooner than desired, often before or shortly after penetration. This condition can lead to frustration, anxiety, and a significant impact on sexual satisfaction for both partners.

It is typically diagnosed when ejaculation occurs within one minute of penetration, but the threshold for what constitutes "premature" can vary. PE is the most frequent sexual dysfunction among men and can occur at any stage of life.



Causes and Risk Factors⁸

Physical Causes

While less common, sensitivity issues, hormonal imbalances, or neurological conditions can contribute to PE. Conditions like thyroid imbalances or erectile dysfunction may also play a role.

Psychological Causes

Psychological factors are often significant contributors. Anxiety, especially performance anxiety, stress, or guilt, can accelerate ejaculation. Relationship issues or previous negative sexual experiences may also be underlying factors.

Risk Factors

Factors that can increase the likelihood of PE include a history of early ejaculation, lack of sexual experience, or having had frequent, hurried sexual encounters. Lifestyle factors such as stress and lack of communication with a partner also contribute to the risk.



Diagnosis and Evaluation⁷

Accurate diagnosis of PE involves a comprehensive evaluation by a healthcare provider:



Medical History

A detailed history of sexual function, onset, and frequency of the condition helps in understanding the individual's situation.



Physical Examination

A physical exam may be performed to rule out any underlying medical conditions.



Diagnostic Criteria

Based on criteria such as the duration and consistency of ejaculation, as well as the impact on sexual satisfaction and relationships, a diagnosis is made.



Additional Assessments

In some cases, further evaluation may be required to address underlying psychological factors or to identify any other potential contributing conditions.



Managing and Treating PE⁸

Effective management and treatment of PE involve a combination of approaches:



Behavioural Techniques:

Methods such as the “start-stop” or “squeeze” techniques help train the body to delay ejaculation. These techniques involve practising control and gradually increasing the duration of sexual activity before ejaculation.



Medications:

Certain medications can help manage PE. Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) are commonly prescribed as they can delay ejaculation. Topical anaesthetics, such as creams or sprays that reduce penile sensitivity, may also be used.



Counseling and Therapy:

Psychological counselling or sex therapy can be beneficial in addressing anxiety, performance pressure, or relationship issues contributing to PE. Therapy provides strategies for managing stress and improving communication with partners.



Lifestyle Adjustments:

Adopting stress-reducing practices, improving overall physical health, and fostering open communication with a partner can contribute to better management of PE.



The Psychological Impact of PE⁸



Emotional Stress

Stress, frustration, and embarrassment can worsen PE, creating a negative cycle where performance anxiety exacerbates the condition.



Self-Esteem

Persistent PE may damage self-esteem and body image, leading to reduced confidence and affecting overall mental health.



Relationship Strain

PE can cause tension and dissatisfaction in relationships, leading to disappointment, frustration, and communication issues.



Mental Health

Chronic PE can contribute to anxiety and depression, making therapy or counselling essential for comprehensive treatment.



Low Libido



Understanding Low Libido⁹

Low libido is characterized by a significant decrease in sexual interest or desire, which can affect an individual's motivation to engage in sexual activities. This condition can be temporary or persistent and may result in a decreased frequency of sexual activity or a complete lack of interest in sex.

Low libido, or reduced sexual desire, can affect individuals' overall quality of life and relationships. It refers to a diminished interest in sexual activity, which can be distressing and impact intimacy and satisfaction.



Causes of Low Libido¹⁰

Physical Causes:



Hormonal imbalances (such as low testosterone), chronic illnesses (e.g., diabetes, cardiovascular disease), medications, and fatigue can contribute to reduced sexual desire.



Psychological Causes:

Stress, anxiety, depression, and past trauma can negatively impact libido, reducing interest in sexual activity.



Lifestyle Factors:

Poor diet, lack of exercise, substance abuse, and inadequate sleep can also influence sexual desire.



Relationship Issues:

Conflicts, lack of emotional connection, or dissatisfaction within a relationship can contribute to low libido.



Diagnosis and Treatment

>> Diagnosis

A thorough evaluation typically includes a review of medical history, physical examination, and possibly laboratory tests to identify hormonal imbalances or underlying health conditions. Psychological assessments may also be conducted to explore emotional and mental health factors.¹⁰

>> Treatment

Treatment for low libido depends on the underlying cause:⁹

- Hormone therapy may be prescribed if hormonal imbalances are identified.
- Psychological counselling or therapy can address emotional and mental health issues.
- Lifestyle changes, such as improving diet, increasing physical activity, and reducing stress, are also beneficial. In some cases, adjusting medications or addressing relationship issues may be necessary.



Relationship Dynamics and Low Libido

Low libido can significantly affect relationship dynamics, leading to frustration and misunderstandings between partners. Open communication about sexual desires, concerns, and expectations is crucial in addressing these issues. Couples may benefit from counselling or therapy to improve emotional intimacy and resolve conflicts that might be contributing to reduced sexual desire. Building a supportive and understanding environment helps foster a healthier and more satisfying sexual relationship.¹⁰



Comprehensive Approaches to Sexual Health

Sexual health is a multifaceted aspect of overall well-being that requires a holistic approach. Addressing sexual health effectively involves integrating lifestyle choices, mental health considerations, and open communication with healthcare providers. Here's a closer look at these essential components.^{1,2}



The Role of Lifestyle in Sexual Health

Lifestyle choices play a crucial role in maintaining and enhancing sexual health:¹¹

Regular physical activity, a balanced diet, and adequate sleep contribute to overall well-being and can positively impact sexual function.

Exercise improves blood flow, reduces stress, and boosts self-esteem, all of which are beneficial for a healthy sex life.

A nutritious diet supports hormonal balance and energy levels, while sufficient sleep is essential for overall health and sexual vitality.

Avoiding excessive alcohol, quitting smoking, and managing weight are also important for preventing sexual dysfunction and promoting sexual satisfaction.



Mental Health and Sexual Dysfunction

Mental health is closely linked to sexual function, with psychological factors often contributing to or exacerbating sexual dysfunction:²

- Conditions such as anxiety, depression, and stress can significantly impact sexual desire, arousal, and performance.
- Addressing mental health issues through therapy, counselling, or medication can improve sexual health outcomes.
- Techniques such as mindfulness, relaxation exercises, and cognitive-behavioural therapy can help manage stress and anxiety, leading to a more fulfilling sexual experience.

It's essential to view mental health as an integral part of sexual health and seek appropriate support to address any underlying issues.



Communication with Healthcare Providers^{1,2}

Honesty and Openness

Discussing sexual issues candidly ensures accurate diagnoses and appropriate treatments.

Detailed Discussions

Sharing symptoms, medical history, and concerns without embarrassment allows for comprehensive evaluations.

Effective Communication with Healthcare Providers

Valuable Insights

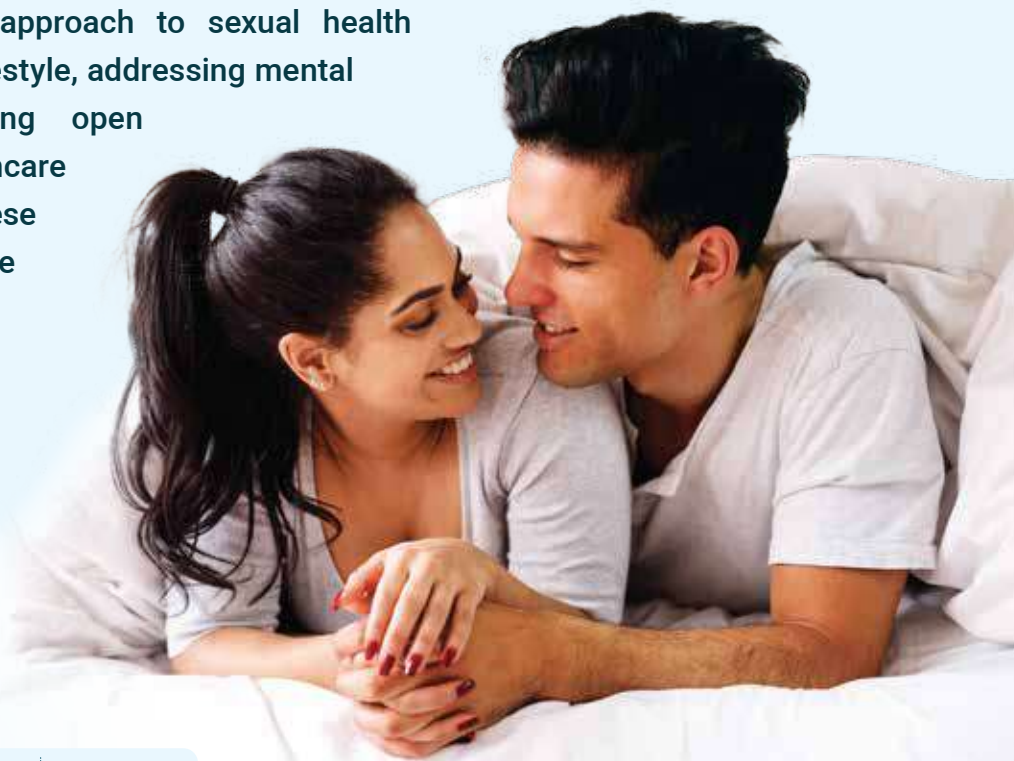
Providers offer insights, recommend therapies, and clarify questions or misconceptions about sexual health.

Regular Check-Ups

Proactive discussions and regular check-ups help in the early detection and prevention of potential issues.

Conclusion

Sexual health is a fundamental component of overall well-being that encompasses physical, emotional, and relational dimensions. A comprehensive approach to sexual health involves maintaining a healthy lifestyle, addressing mental health concerns, and fostering open communication with healthcare providers. By prioritizing these elements, individuals can enhance their sexual health, improve their quality of life, and achieve greater satisfaction in their relationships.



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