

Female Sexual Dysfunction

Sexual dysfunction means difficulty with sexual response whether it be desire, pleasure or pain related. Many women experience problems with sexual function at some point and some women may have difficulties throughout their lives. Treatment often involves more than one specific approach as your sexual response includes many different aspects. Symptoms will typically vary, but the most common is a low sexual desire. Other symptoms include difficulty with arousal, or pain with sexual stimulation, penetration or orgasm.

Causes of sexual dysfunction:

- Stress
- Drug or alcohol use
- Relationship issues
- Hormonal fluctuation, especially around menopause, pregnancy and breastfeeding
- Anxiety or depression
- Medical problems like diabetes, skin conditions, autoimmune conditions and neurologic conditions
- Medications and supplements
- Pelvic floor issues (problems with the muscles in the pelvis that surround the vagina)
- Trauma (psychological and/or physical)

Treatment options:

Sexual dysfunction is only a problem if it is bothering you. It is not necessary to seek treatment if you are not bothered by this. Below are things that you can do to start improving your sex life, but additional treatment will depend on the cause of your symptoms.

- Improving your lifestyle by getting a good night's sleep and eating a well-balanced diet
- Managing your stress by practicing meditation, yoga, pilates, exercising regularly
- Practicing healthy habits such as limiting alcohol
- Using lubricants if you are experiencing vaginal dryness or pain during sex. We recommend silicone-based lubricants (Astroglide X or Diamond) or coconut oil, which tends to last longer than most typical water-based lubricants
- Trying a device such as a vibrator to help enhance stimulation
- Relationship counseling if needed
- Creating novelty in your relationship

When these changes are not enough, you should discuss treatment options with your provider. This may include one or more of the following:

- Over-the-counter vaginal moisturizers: coconut oil, vitamin E, Replens, Revaree, Hylogyn
- Topical vaginal hormonal treatments: estrogen creams, suppositories or rings, Intrarosa
- Estrogen receptor modulators: Ospheña
- Vaginal laser treatments
- Pelvic floor physical therapy
- Dilators