

## Talking with Your Partner About Erectile Dysfunction.



Why you shouldn't keep [Erectile Dysfunction](#) a secret from your sexual partner.

Top of Form Bottom of Form About half of men between ages 40 and 70 report erection problems. So why do so many men remain hush-hush about their struggles with ED?

You shouldn't Staying quiet about sexual anxiety can make the situation worse because, inevitably, when a man has to live with erectile dysfunction, so does his sex partner, the best way to manage an erection problem is to work together as a couple.

Trying to deal with erectile dysfunction in secret will almost certainly be bad for your relationship and make your condition worse. Good communication is the best place to start.

## Explaining How Erectile Dysfunction Affects Sexuality

On the most basic level, erectile dysfunction may keep you from getting an erection at all or it may cause an erection problem that makes it hard to complete the act of intercourse.

Erectile dysfunction can also have some serious emotional effects. Some of the feelings associated with erectile dysfunction include fear, anger, anxiety, and depression, and they can turn sex into something you fear instead of something you enjoy.

Here are how the emotional effects of erectile dysfunction can become a vicious cycle that damages your sex life:

- Anxiety over failure can cause you to avoid sex.
- Avoidance of sex can cause withdrawal from your sex partner and create serious relationship problems.
- Your relationship problems and emotional stress can make your erectile dysfunction worse.

## Working with Your Partner

Erectile Dysfunction is a couple's problem. When a man has erectile dysfunction, his sex partner is also affected. You cannot shut your sex partner out of the problem or the solution. Good communication is the foundation of a strong relationship and an essential part of sexuality. Here are tips that can help you communicate more effectively:

- Choose the right place and time to talk. Explain your medical condition in a clear and truthful way. Your doctor can give you literature on the condition to share with your partner.
- Talk about your feelings — get them out in the open where you can start to deal with them.
- Talk openly about what you like sexually. Keep the lines of communication open.
- Reassure each other and be positive. Remember that in most cases erectile dysfunction can be treated.
- Be patient and supportive with each other. **Let him know how much you value him.** Remind him that ED isn't a reflection on his masculinity, and that it hasn't changed how you feel about him. Assure him that you'll get through this together.

## There are steps that you and your sex partner can take to work together during the evaluation, treatment, and management of erectile dysfunction:

- Go to doctor's appointments together. **Offer to go with him to the doctor.** Even if he decides to go on his own, he'll know you want to be there for him.
- **Learn as much as you can about ED** and share the information. The more you know, the better prepared you'll be able to help your partner. You can talk about the lifestyle changes and medical treatments that could help.
- Discuss which **erectile dysfunction treatment options** might work best for both of you.
- Try being intimate without intercourse. Consider alternate techniques to achieve sexual satisfaction. **Adjust your sex life.** Find other ways to please and satisfy each other so that he doesn't feel pressured to perform.
- Show each other what you enjoy sexually.
- If you are having trouble working together on this issue, **consider meeting with a couples' counselor.**
- **Keep up the other intimate parts of your relationship.** Feeling close to each other can include more than sex. You may also want to talk to a counselor, if the changes related to ED are worrying the two of you.

## If you're going through ED, it's important to know that sex isn't the only way to be intimate with your partner. There are all kinds of ways to remain close:



**Talk about your feelings:** Sharing in this way can make the two of you closer. Talk about each other's needs and concerns. It'll really help you overcome barriers.

**Do things together:** Hobbies, sports, volunteering, or other shared interests can bring you two closers together. Whatever it is, go out there and do it together.

**Make time to be alone together:** Share a bath or a candlelight dinner. Even a walk, or just holding each other in bed can go a long way.

**Try something new in the bedroom:** Explore new techniques that can bring pleasure without [sex](#). Books on alternative sexual practices are available.

**Talk to a counselor:** Think about getting some sessions with a professional therapist. Talking with someone about what's troubling you can have real benefits.

**And finally,** have fun. Don't put too much pressure on yourself. Enjoy life.

RESOURCES:  
[MEN'S HEALTH](#), [WEBMED](#).