

Bitesize Guide to:



Erectile Dysfunction (ED)

All men have a high chance that at some point in their life, they will suffer from erectile dysfunction (ED). Therefore, it is important to know the signs and the symptoms to treat ED as quickly as possible. This is our bitesize guide to the condition.

What is it?

Erectile dysfunction is the inability to get or maintain an erection and thus be unable to engage in penetrative sex.

Who gets it?

ED is extremely common, especially the older one is. An estimated 50% of men between the ages of 40 and 70 suffer from ED, meaning that there are many people who have experienced it.

Why does it happen?

There are many different reasons for ED but there is no definitive cause. Generally, the causes can be split into physical and mental causes.

Physical causes include:

- High cholesterol or diabetes
- Previous surgery or injury
- High blood pressure
- Excessive drinking or smoking

Mental causes include:

- Anxiety
- Depression

Diagnosing Erectile Dysfunction

Many men are embarrassed by their erectile dysfunction, but it is important to see a GP for treatment

Your GP will ask you questions about your situation, and might decide to carry out a physical examination. Here are a few of the questions your GP might ask:

- What are your symptoms?
- What is the level of your alcohol consumption?
- Do you take drugs?
- Are you currently on any other medication?

- What is the current state of your overall health?

You also may be asked about your sexual history. This may be uncomfortable but as erectile dysfunction is a common issue; your GP will have experience in addressing ED with patients. You may request a male GP if you wish.

Treating Erectile Dysfunction

Your GP's first goal will be to determine the root cause of your erectile dysfunction. Some patients may have underlying health issues that are more serious, such as heart disease or diabetes, which demand treatment first.

It might also be recommended that you alter your lifestyle. This might involve undertaking any of the following steps:

- Losing weight
- Reducing your alcohol consumption
- Not taking illegal drugs
- Giving up smoking
- Keeping fit by carrying out regular exercise

4 Key Facts about Erectile Dysfunction

1. For physical cases of erectile dysfunction, two thirds of cases are treated with medication
2. For mental cases of erectile dysfunction, you may be treated with cognitive behavioural therapy
3. As the narrowing of the arteries is a common physical cause, losing weight will reduce your risk of suffering from the condition
4. Erectile dysfunction is thought to occur in 15-25% of people who suffer from a serious head injury

If you think you may be suffering from erectile dysfunction, speak to your GP.

Ref: BG01 May 2016
Planned review: Sept 2018

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Registered charity 1128683