



condition

Erectile Dysfunction

(also known as erection problems or ED)

class

Sexual Health

description

Having an erection problem means that you regularly cannot achieve or maintain an erection sufficient to have sex.

Referred to as erectile dysfunction (ED), erection problems are extremely common and affect around 10% of the adult male population. It may not mean total loss of sexual satisfaction for some men, but for many it creates anxiety and stress that adversely affects personal relationships and quality of life. Any man can experience problems, regardless of age, so you are not alone.

causes

What causes an erection problem differs from man to man. Research over the last 20 years has shown that there are several common causes of this condition.

Some medical conditions can cause damage to nerves or restrict blood flow in the penis and this may cause men to experience erection problems. These include: **diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure** (hypertension), and **high cholesterol**.

It is important to know that ED can sometimes be an early warning sign of cardiovascular (heart) disease or diabetes. It is important to get these checked by your doctor.

Sometimes erection problems are associated with psychological factors like: stress and anxiety (at work or at home), dissatisfaction or conflicts within your relationship, or fear of failing to get an erection.

There are also many other factors which can contribute to erection problems, most of which are treatable. For example:

- Smoking can reduce the flow of blood to your penis by narrowing blood vessels
- Drinking excess alcohol is known to be linked with erection problems
- If your diet contains too much fat it may narrow blood vessels, and reduce blood flow to your penis
- If you are **overweight** you are more likely to suffer from problems like **heart disease** or **diabetes**, which may lead to erection problems

talking to your doctor

It is important to consider the questions you would like to ask your doctor:

- What is causing my erection problems?
- What options are currently available that would be suitable for me?
- What treatment would you recommend for my situation?
- Can I receive treatment on the NHS?
- How should I take this treatment?
- How do I involve my partner in my treatment?
- Are there any other nearby specialists who can help me with this problem?

treatment

There are many effective treatment options available. You will need to discuss these with your doctor, to find the most appropriate treatment for your needs.

Some treatments may not work for everyone first time. There may be many reasons for this. If your treatment isn't working for you after several attempts, you may want to speak to your doctor.