

Erectile Dysfunction (ED)

What is ED?

Erectile dysfunction, or ED, is the inability to get or keep an erection firm enough for sexual intercourse. ED occurs more often as men grow older.

What causes ED?

ED may be caused by poor blood flow to the penis. The following can contribute to poor blood flow and symptoms of ED:

- Medical conditions, such as:
 - Diabetes, high blood pressure, atherosclerosis, heart disease
- Lifestyle choices contributing to heart and blood vessel disease, such as:
 - Smoking, drinking too much alcohol, being overweight, not exercising

ED can also be caused by:

- Diseases that cause damage to the nerves, such as multiple sclerosis
- Injury or surgery that harms specific nerves, muscles, arteries, or tissue
- Hormonal changes such as low testosterone
- Psychological issues, such as stress, anxiety, guilt, depression, low self-esteem, or fear of sexual failure
- Side effects of medicines including blood pressure drugs, antihistamines, antidepressants, tranquilizers, and diet pills

How can ED be treated?

ED can be treated at any age. Treatments include:

- Lifestyle changes, such as quitting smoking, drinking less alcohol, losing excess weight, becoming more active
- Reduction or replacement of medicines that may cause ED
- Psychotherapy
- Medicine taken orally or injected or inserted into the penis
- Mechanical vacuum devices
- Surgery

Talk with your healthcare provider about any questions you may have about ED.