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See end of article for how to find more information on STUD 100®

"SEXUAL HEALING: Most men suffer from problems in the boudoir at some point or another. We debunk a few myths and offer suggestions for a happier, healthier sex life"

In this stressful day and age, we are constantly being bombarded by images of the exciting, fulfilling life we're supposed to be having. We're supposed to be knocking 'em dead in the workplace and whooping it up in the bedroom. But it isn't always plain sailing. Sometimes it can feel like we're drowning under the pressure of our own high expectations. It's no surprise that our sex lives are suffering. A myriad of complaints beleaguer us. But they are not necessarily irreversible.

PREMATURE EJACULATION (PE)

Coming too quickly is one of the most common sexual problems around. Out of a survey of 5,000 British males, approximately 10% had experienced premature ejaculation at some time. It's more common in younger men, as a man's control improves as he matures. In the meantime, it can be terrible for a man's self-confidence. There may be an evolutionary slant to this - a caveman probably stood a better chance of getting his cavewoman pregnant if he got on with it, sharpish. But more likely, nerves are the culprits, compounded by feelings of unworthiness as a lover. Persistent premature ejaculation can have a detrimental effect on a relationship, as the man becomes so preoccupied with trying to control his ejaculation that he can't really get on with the job in hand. The woman can become frustrated. Harsh words may fly.

POSSIBLE CURES

Distraction techniques

Think about something unrelated (your new wallpaper design or your credit card bill - unless that actually has the adverse effect).

Stop and start

Practise a 'stop and start' exercise on your own or with your partner, whereby the man stops stimulation of the penis short of ejaculation, rests for a minute or so, then resumes. Gradually, control is gained.

Delay sprays

Try a delay spray like STUD 100® Desensitizing spray for men (www.stud100.com) or Premjact® (www.premjact.com). Both of these products are licensed pharmaceuticals, clinically proven to be safe and effective, and are available from chemists, pharmacies, online or by mail order. They momentarily reduce the sensitivity of the penile skin, thereby delaying ejaculation. Around 5 sprays applied to the head and shaft of the penis about 10 minutes before intercourse should stave off the tricky moment and ensure that sex goes on... and on. Fun for both partners guaranteed.

Therapy

Get therapy! There's no shame in it and you may well strengthen your relationship in more ways than you bargained for. Contact Relate on 01788 573 241 or go to www.relate.org.uk, or check

out BASRT, The British Association for Sexual and Relationship Therapy, at www.basrt.org.uk.

ERECTILE DYSFUNCTION (ED)

Erectile Dysfunction (ED), is very common, particularly with younger men, who can get het-up about sex or suffer the effects of over consumption of alcohol. Relationship problems, depression, bereavement, tiredness, stress or deep-rooted hang ups all contribute. In rare cases, diabetes is the hidden reason behind impotence, but anxiety pure and simple is the most usual reason for an elusive hard on. But don't panic - impotence is often only temporary.

POSSIBLE CURES

Viagra

Helping to relax the blood vessels in the penis, Viagra gets blood flowing into the penis, enabling an erection. However, it will only bring about an erection if the man is actually sexually stimulated. Viagra is available in three strengths - 25mg, 50mg and 100mg - the dose is selected by your doctor, and should be swallowed whole with water about an hour before anticipated frolics. Within a 4 to 6 hour period after taking the tablet and erection should occur in response to sexual stimulation. Don't drink large amounts of alcohol before taking Viagra - the magic blue pill and flagons of fine wine do not make happy bedfellows.

Injections

Injection treatments for ED can help men achieve an erection suitable for intercourse, using drugs that relax the blood vessels feeding blood into the penis, increasing the blood flow. The muscle layers surrounding the erectile bodies relax and expand, preventing the flow of blood out of the penis, helping to maintain the erection, which will normally develop in 10 to 15 minutes and should last for about an hour. This treatment is only available on prescription from your doctor, or from specialist clinics.

The Vacuum Pump

Vacuum devices are the most widely used and successful treatment of ED, and consist of a clear plastic cylinder and a pump - either hand or battery operated. The flaccid penis is placed in the cylinder and an airtight seal is obtained with a lubricating gel. The cylinder is pressed firmly against the body and a partial vacuum is created by evacuating the air from within the cylinder. The penis becomes engorged with blood, and when firm enough for intercourse, a plastic constricting ring is slipped from the end of the cylinder around the base of the penis. This traps blood in the penis and facilitates an erection lasting up to half an hour. Although originally considered to be a gimmick, vacuum devices are relatively cheap, non invasive and efficient, and help more than 90% of ED sufferers. For more information, and to learn about other methods to cure impotence, contact The Impotence Association on 020 8767 7791.

LACK OF SEX DRIVE

Men with a lack of sex drive can get erections - they have simply lost the desire to have sex. Depression, alcoholism, cocaine abuse, serious relationship disorders, anaemia, obesity, or hyperprolactinaemia (where too much of the hormone prolactin is produced by the pituitary gland) can be the causes. Fortunately (for some), it's relatively uncommon. Women can suffer from the same problem, with the added bonus of 'post-baby sex syndrome', or the extremely common loss of libido after giving birth. The violent changes in hormones have a lot to do with

this, but the general trauma and exhaustion related to childbirth are usually the cause.

POSSIBLE CURES

Train your senses

Relationship therapists have a very successful tool up their sleeve in the shape of an exercise for couples called Train Your Senses, which reduces the anxiety associated with sex. In one of these sessions, by turn, one partner takes on an active role while the other one is more passive. The actual 'act', or indeed anything too sexually oriented, is forbidden to begin with, and the action taking place is more along the lines of caressing. A lot of caressing. Couples then report back to their therapist, who gives new instructions - eventually they get to go all the way, by which time they've been distracted from their original anxieties and the sexual rapport between partners has been refreshed and awakened.

In the meantime, while trying to get to the root of your problem, try to relax and get things in perspective. Share your feelings with your partner - it will make you closer. Dip into the wealth of specialist practitioners and associations available, scour the web, and above all, keep an open mind. And remember, you are not alone.

For more information on STUD 100®, please contact:

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