

## *Does growing older cause other changes that affect sexuality?*

- One important change is that blood flow to the pelvic area decreases. The reduced blood circulation to the genitals causes the vagina to become smaller and less elastic.
- The walls of the vagina may become thin and tender. This condition is called vaginal atrophy. Intercourse can be painful for women with this condition.
- Vaginal atrophy results in an increased frequency of yeast and bacterial infections.
- It is common for problems with urine leakage or increased urinary frequency to develop in menopausal women. This is due to a weakening of pelvic muscle support. These problems can reduce a woman's desire to have sex.
- As both women and men age, there is an increased risk of disease or other health changes. If one or both partners develop health problems, the sexual relationship can be affected.

## *What are the treatments for sex problems after menopause?*

*There are a number of lifestyle changes or treatment possibilities which can improve sex during the menopausal years. Be sure to discuss all options with your health care professional.*

- Some treatments are more appropriate than others, depending on the type of problem and how severe it is. Usually a combination of treatments may be used for the various sexual concerns a woman may have over the second half of her life.
- First and foremost, start with **healthy living** practices. Changes in diet and exercise can make a difference in the way you feel.
- Medical treatment with important benefits for menopausal women may include replacement of hormones that are lost during menopause. **Hormone replacement therapy** is also called HRT.
- Various over-the-counter products such as lubricants, as well as prescription medication and changes in approach to sexual relations can help you and your partner to enjoy a satisfying sex life for many years beyond menopause.
- **O-Shot™** - a procedure that involves injection of platelet rich plasma into the vaginal area - that has been scientifically proven to improve urinary incontinence, sensation, and climax.



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## *Sexual Health After Menopause*

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## Introduction

Sexual problems that are easily treatable are often dismissed by menopausal women as just part of aging. If continued sexual fulfillment is important to you, be assured that it is possible at any age.

It is very important to talk with your sex partner about changes in your body that menopause and age are causing. Menopause is a time to explore new ways to enjoy sexual gratification with your partner. Satisfying sexual exchange can be much more than just intercourse. Kissing, holding, and touching are part of an active sex life, too. Take things slowly and enjoy this changing time of your life.



## How menopause affect a woman's sexuality

*Levels of hormones that are made in your ovaries begin to drop gradually during the 5 to 10 years leading up to natural menopause. The primary female sex hormone, estrogen, is one that decreases. Another hormone that decreases is called testosterone. This hormone is often mistaken as a male sex hormone, but testosterone is also natural to the female body.*

**Loss of the hormone estrogen** can cause some physical symptoms that may interfere with sex.

- Many menopausal women have hot flashes that can occur at any time of the day, causing discomfort and irritability.
- Night sweats are also common during menopause. Often, they can interrupt a woman's sleep and may decrease a woman's desire to have sex.
- Estrogen loss also causes vaginal dryness. Without adequate lubrication, intercourse can be uncomfortable or even painful.

**Loss of testosterone** may also affect a woman's desire for sex.

- Research shows that diminished testosterone in some menopausal women can lower their sex drive, or libido.
- There are many other reasons for a loss of libido, such as psychological issues, relationship problems, vaginal infections, pelvic disorders, and some medications.

## Symptoms of changing sexual function

*These are some of the changes in the way the female body responds sexually during menopause:*

- You may need more time for the vagina to lubricate
- Your amount of vaginal lubrication may be less
- Intercourse may become painful or difficult because the vagina is not lubricated enough
- Your breasts and genitals may not respond to stimulation
- Frequency of sex may decrease
- You may not experience orgasm as often
- Your desire for sex may decrease

