

SELF SCREENING QUESTIONNAIRE

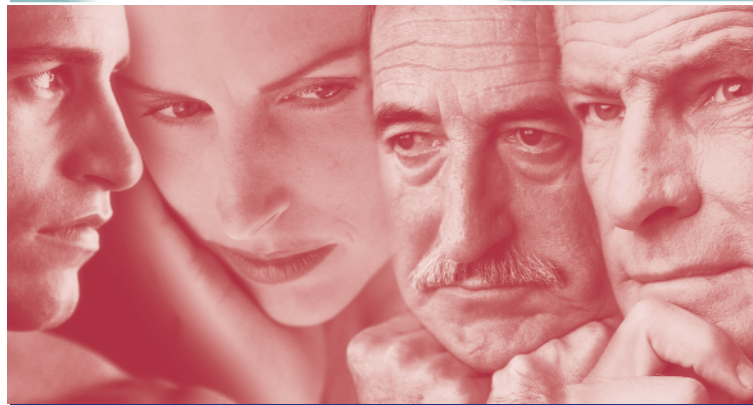
If erection problems are having an effect on your life, it is important that you talk to your doctor. To help you discuss your problem, answer the questions below and give it to your doctor at your visit.

	Yes	No
■ Do you find it difficult to get an erection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
■ Do you find it difficult to maintain an erection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
■ Do you ever wake up with an erection in the mornings?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
■ Did loss of erections occur suddenly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
■ Did you start to lose erections gradually?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
■ Have you noticed any changes in the appearance of your penis?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
■ Do you take medications for any of the following?		
High Blood Pressure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Diabetes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Depression	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stomach Ulcers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sickness and vomiting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arthritis	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prostate Problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

■ How many cigarettes do you smoke each day?

■ How many units of alcohol do you drink each day?

(1 unit is equal to a medium sized glass of wine or 1/2 pint of regular strength beer/lager or one measure of spirit)



Erectile Dysfunction?

Your Questions Answered.



sexual dysfunction
information bureau

Supported by an educational grant from



WHAT IS ERECTILE DYSFUNCTION?

Erectile dysfunction (ED) is the persistent or recurring inability to achieve or maintain a hard penis (erection) sufficient for sexual activity.



TALKING ABOUT ERECTION PROBLEMS WITH YOUR DOCTOR

Many men will have an occasional problem of achieving or maintaining an erection at some stage of their lives. For other men it happens more frequently. If you regularly cannot achieve or maintain an erection sufficient for sexual activity, you may be suffering from ED and should consult with your doctor.

Your doctor has probably seen and talked with many other men in your situation and will be able to offer valuable advice which could prove extremely beneficial to you. If you are uncomfortable talking to your usual GP, you could ask your doctor to refer you to another GP.

As some men find it an embarrassing subject to discuss, below are some suggested opening lines when talking to a doctor;

“My sex life isn’t what it used to be.”

“I’ve got a problem that I find quite difficult to talk about. It’s to do with having an erection.”

“I have some trouble getting an erection and I’m concerned.”

“I have diabetes. I heard this can cause erection problems. Is this true?”

“Is it possible that the tablets I’m taking are causing me to have an erection problem?”

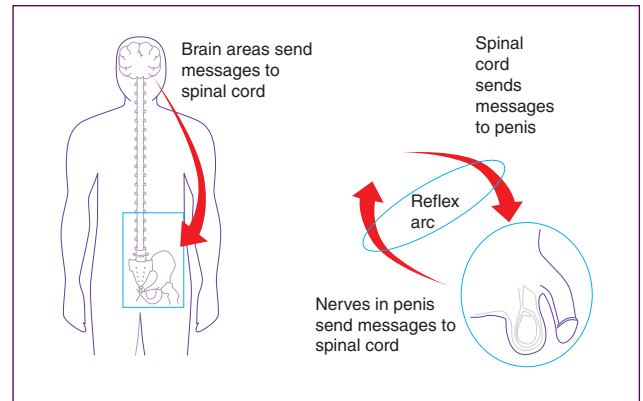
Basic tests that may help your doctor to diagnose the problem and choose the best treatment for you may consist of a blood or urine test. However, these tests are not necessary in everyone.

Treatment options your doctor may suggest include;

- Prescription tablets
- Intracavernosal injections (injections to the penis)
- Transurethral therapy (a tiny pellet is inserted into the penis using an applicator)
- A vacuum pump (a vacuum tube is applied to the penis stimulating and erection)
- Surgical penile implants
- Talking therapy



Before seeking medical advice, some lifestyle changes are worth considering. We know that a heavy alcohol consumption and smoking play a significant role in ED. It is often helpful to reduce or quit either or both as well as seeking medical help.



HOW DOES AN ERECTION OCCUR?

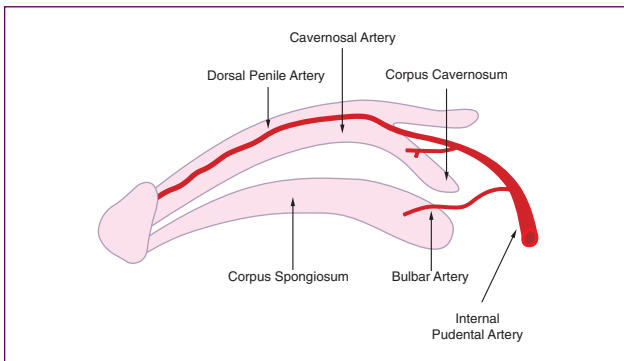
When a man is aroused, the penis changes from a flaccid (soft) state to a hard or rigid state. These phases involve interactions between the brain, spinal cord, blood vessels, nerves, hormones and the spongy tissues of the penis. An erection is maintained until climax, ejaculation or 'come off' takes place or sexual interest ceases. For a man to sustain an erection he must be aroused by sight, thought, smells, touch, sound or a combination of these.

WHAT CAUSES ERECTILE DYSFUNCTION?

There are many causes of erectile dysfunction and these may be divided broadly into physical and psychological causes; the majority of men with erectile dysfunction experience a combination of these causes.

For many years it was thought that the main causes of erection problems were psychological in origin. However, it is now believed that physical conditions are present in about 70% of cases of erection problems. In addition, worrying about difficulties with your erection may contribute to the development of a more persistent problem due to the 'fear of failure' or 'performance anxiety'.

It is estimated that in the general population approximately 1 in 10 men, about 200,000 Irish men, may suffer from erection problems at any given time with 18% of men aged 50-59, 38% of men between 60-69 and 57% of men aged over 70 experiencing erection problems.



PHYSICAL CAUSES

Men whose ED has a physical origin often experience a gradual onset or erection failure. Physical causes of ED include:

- Deficient blood flow to the penis for reasons such as blocked arteries (vascular cause)
- Excessive drainage of blood from the penis (venous leak)
- Damage or diseases affecting the nerves that go to or from the penis
- Hormone abnormalities
- Excess alcohol consumption or drug abuse
- Diabetes
- Smoking
- Heart disease
- High cholesterol
- Side effects of prescribed drugs
- Diseases affecting the erectile tissue of the penis
- Neurological diseases such as stroke, Parkinson's disease, spinal cord injuries etc
- Chronic diseases such as kidney and liver failure
- Natural ageing

PSYCHOLOGICAL CAUSES

A sudden onset of ED in men who can achieve erections under some circumstances but not under others suggests a psychological cause. Sometimes a triggering factor may be easily identified, such as a serious disagreement with the partner or being interrupted while making love. Common psychological causes include;

- Stress or anxiety at work or at home
- Marital or relationship conflicts and dissatisfaction / difficulties
- Worry about sexual performance
- Depression
- Unresolved sexual orientation
- Pornography abuse



GETTING TREATMENT

There are many ways in which erection problems can be treated. Your doctor will discuss the various options with you and recommend a treatment that is most suitable for your needs.

DON'T SUFFER IN SILENCE

There is an old adage that a 'problem shared is a problem halved' and this is true for many men suffering from erectile dysfunction. ED is a man's condition but a couple's concern. By discussing your problem with your partner, the pressure may be relieved and normal erectile function improved.

Don't let age be a barrier to seeking medical advice as it is considered normal for most men and women to enjoy sexual activity throughout all stages of their lives.

A final note; there are many men who experience erectile dysfunction and are being successfully treated. Most men with ED can be easily treated by their GP with effective and safe medications.

The Sexual Dysfunction Information Bureau is made up of a group of Irish healthcare professionals representing general practice, urology and psychotherapy who are committed to developing a better public understanding of sexual dysfunction and its causes.

P.O. Box 8064, Dublin 2 Confidential helpline: 1850 923 098

