

Hot Sex After Hot Flashes

Menopause and Your Sex Drive

Let's face it, there is a certain amount of science involved in how our bodies work. As women age, estrogen levels decline; this lower hormone level can affect sexual desire and lubrication. Female arousal is not just science, though. It is a combination of physical, intellectual and emotional connections. Connecting with your partner in and out of the bedroom is important.

Rekindle the Spark

- Educate yourself about your changing body.
- Talk to each other about more than small talk. Ask about what is important and exciting to your partner. This may have changed over the years.
- Intimacy includes making time for each other. Hold hands during dinner or take a walk together.
- Limit distractions in the bedroom. Turn off your tablet and television.
- Minimize any pain by experimenting with positions or using lubricants.

What about the science?

Between 25-45% of postmenopausal women experience painful sex. Vaginal dryness, caused by a drop in estrogen and vaginal atrophy from shrinking cells, can result in painful sex. Good news ladies! This is almost always treatable.

- Water-soluble lubricants can be purchased over the counter and help decrease pain from friction.
- Estrogen products and hormone therapy prescribed by your provider come in many forms: cream, pills or patches.
- The more often you have sex, the less likely you are to experience pain related to dryness. Sex increases blood flow to your genitals helping to keep them healthy.
- Life stressors can impact sexual desire. Counseling with a therapist specializing in sexual dysfunction can be effective.

What about STIs at my age?

Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) are infections from bacteria or viruses that are spread through sexual contact. You can contract a sexually transmitted infection at any age in which you are sexually active. Risk does not decline with age so protect yourself. Although some infections have outward symptoms, many have none. You may not know that you have been infected. STIs include:

- Herpes
- Chlamydia
- Gonorrhea
- HIV and AIDS
- Syphilis
- HPV

Questions to Ask Your Health Care Professional

1. Is lack of sexual desire normal after menopause?
2. What type of vaginal lubricant do you recommend?
3. Is there a female medication available that increases sexual libido?
4. How do I go about finding a therapist with specialty training in sexuality?

Resources:

My.clevelandclinic.org
www.womenshealth.gov
www.healthywomen.org

*Call the Upstate Women's
Health nurse line at
315-464-2756
for more information or
to make an appointment*

