

# 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.**



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