

Erectile Dysfunction

Impaired male sexual function, known as erectile dysfunction (ED), is a common and distressing complaint for many men as they age. This condition is much better understood now than in the past, and many effective treatment options have become available (PDE-5 drugs, injections or surgery). There is increasing evidence that early ED may be improved, not only by medications, but lifestyle changes including cessation of smoking, weight reduction and exercise. While ED can lead to a downward spiral of loss of self esteem and depression, effective treatment may reverse this without the sedative side effects of antidepressants. Men with ED should seek evaluation and treatment to improve not only their sexual performance but overall quality of life.

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Years ago, ED carried the stigma of being a psychogenic problem, in part, because it was not understood and had no effective treatment. It is now evident that ED is usually a manifestation of peripheral vascular disease (declining circulation with age). Of greater interest is the fact that blood vessels to the penis are much smaller than to other areas of the body and thus ED may be the first presentation of peripheral vascular disease in

men before heart attack, stroke, renal failure or leg cramps and claudication. An adequate erection is probably indicative of a healthy heart. Men with ED should not keep this a private matter, but bring up the issue to their physicians to look for vascular risk factors such as hypertension, diabetes or a metabolic syndrome. Early management of these conditions may not only improve their ED, but contribute to better vascular and general health.

For more information on erectile dysfunction, please visit our website, urology.urmc.edu or talk to your physician about a referral. Please call (585) 275-2838 for additional information, or to make an appointment.