

ERECTILE DYSFUNCTION

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Erectile dysfunction (impotence) is the inability to obtain and maintain an erection. Some of the common causes include aging due to reduced blood flow to the penis, alcohol and tobacco use, diabetes, diseases or injuries that affect the nerves going to the penis, heart disease, hormonal causes, obesity, and side effects of certain medications. Stress, anxiety and depression also can play a role. Complications resulting from erectile dysfunction can include an unsatisfactory sex life, a low self-esteem, relationship problems, and the inability to get your partner pregnant.

MANAGEMENT INCLUDES:

- **Diet & Exercise**
Eat a healthy diet (a low salt and fat diet with fruits and vegetables.) Exercise regularly. If possible, aim for at least 30 minutes of physical activity on most days of the week (e.g. brisk walking, swimming, dancing, etc.). If you are overweight or obese (defined by a Body Mass index (BMI) of 25 or higher), this can increase your risk of high blood pressure. Lose some weight. Reduce your stress. Stress can make your heart beat faster and your blood vessels contract that may be harmful over time.
- **Alcohol & Tobacco Use**
If you consume alcohol, please drink in moderation and sensibly. If you smoke, make every effort to stop. Both can increase your chance of developing erectile dysfunction along with other potential medical conditions.
- **High Blood Pressure & Cholesterol**
Check your blood pressure regularly along with your cholesterol levels. If either is high, your doctor will be able to help with treatment.
- **Diabetes**
If you have diabetes, good control of your blood sugar levels and blood pressure can help minimize the impact of diabetes on the blood vessels.
- **Medications**
Some medications can cause erectile dysfunction. Check the leaflet that comes with any medication that you take to see if erectile dysfunction is a possible side effect. Do not stop any prescribed medication but see your family doctor if you suspect this to be the cause. Your doctor may be able to switch to a different medicine to reduce side effects.

MEDICAL CARE & TREATMENT OPTIONS:

If you have any questions about erectile dysfunction, please contact your Osteopathic Family Physician. Your physician can diagnose erectile dysfunction with a thorough history and physical exam along with the appropriate tests. Management includes the right treatment plan and any necessary follow-up with your doctor. Your family doctor will help you determine which current recommended treatment(s) (including medications, devices/implants, counseling, etc.) will work best for you. In case of any emergency, you should call your doctor or 911 right away.

SOURCE(S): *Erectile Dysfunction. Gov, Mayo Clinic, and Up-To-Date.*

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