Pain with intercourse not an uncommon condition for women, and also very treatable
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Pain with intercourse, also called dyspareunia, is a common problem for women of all ages. At some point in life most women have experienced some form of pain during intercourse ranging from mild to severe and occurring once, occasionally, or for long stretches of time.

If you are experiencing pain and are concerned about the cause of it or seeking a resolution to the problem it will be helpful for you to determine where exactly the pain is originating from.

This can assist you and your healthcare provider in determining what may be causing the pain and deciding how best to treat it.

Here is a list of common causes of specific kinds of pain with intercourse:

**Vulvar pain**
This refers to pain felt on the surface/outside of the vagina. Pain can occur when some part of the vulva is touched. The vulva may be tender or irritated from using soaps or over-the-counter vaginal sprays or douches. Other causes include scars, cysts or infections.

**Vaginal pain**
This refers to pain felt at the opening of the vagina.

**Vaginal dryness**
The most common cause of pain inside the vagina is lack of moisture. This can occur with certain medications, with certain medical conditions, or because you are not aroused.

It can occur at certain times of your life such as during or just after pregnancy, while breastfeeding, or near or after menopause.

**Vaginitis**
This is an inflammation of the vagina. The most common symptoms of vaginitis are discharge, itching and burning of the vagina and vulva.

Vaginitis has many possible causes, such as yeast or bacterial infection. In addition, this can occur if the lining of the vagina becomes irritated after being in contact with an irritant such as soaps, detergents or perfumes.

**Vaginismus**
Vaginismus occurs when there are involuntary spasms of the muscles at the opening of the vagina. It causes pain when your partner tries to enter the vagina.

In some cases, vaginismus is present the first time a woman has — or tries to have — sex. It often follows some traumatic event such as a forceful act of intercourse, painful pelvic exam or even the fear of becoming pregnant. The muscles spasm, narrowing the entry into the vagina and causing pain during
intercourse.

Deep Pain

This pain is felt in the lower back, pelvic region, uterus and bladder.

Pain that starts deep inside may be a sign of an internal problem. Pain that happens when the penis pushes and moves the pelvic organs can have many causes:

- Pelvic inflammatory disease (PID)
- Problems with the uterus
- Endometriosis
- A pelvic mass
- Bowel or bladder disease
- Scar tissue (adhesions)
- Ovarian cysts

The causes of the pain may not all be physical

It is very possible that the cause of your pain is physical, but for many women there is an emotional component that is either contributing to pain during intercourse or amplifying pain from another source.

Many women suffer from mood disorders or have been victims of sexual or emotional abuse. This needs to be treated at the same time other physical causes are investigated. If this is the case, your healthcare provider can refer you to different specialists who can help you.

Whatever the case, your healthcare provider can help.

Because this condition is so common, there is no reason not to consult your healthcare provider if you suspect something is wrong.

You may find treatment for the physical cause of your pain, you may discover the early stages of a more serious condition and get a chance to start treatment early, and you may be able to improve the quality of your sex life.

All of these large benefits make it worth the effort of a visit to your healthcare provider.

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