Know the truth about erectile dysfunction

Posted by Dr. Allen Seftel, University Hospitals Case Medical Center June 25, 2008 09:43AM

Categories: Impact, Netwellness

Erectile dysfunction is not just about having sex, it's about overall sexual function. And its causes often have nothing to do with sex.

Let's first talk about what erectile dysfunction isn’t. It's not an inability to have repeated intercourse (most men usually only have one episode of vaginal intercourse every couple of days). It's not about premature ejaculation.

And it's not about a lack of desire.

Erectile dysfunction, known commonly as ED, is simply "the inability of the male to achieve an erect penis as part of the overall multifaceted process of male sexual function." The current definition de-emphasizes intercourse as the main aspect of sexual life. It gives equal importance to other aspects of male sexual behavior.

And ED can become present in most men somewhere between the ages of 35 and 65.

We believe ED is caused by diseases that affect the blood vessels and circulatory system (also known as the vascular system), such as:

- diabetes;
- high blood pressure;
- high cholesterol;
- smoking;
- obesity;
- sedentary lifestyle.

Cancer treatments can be another cause of ED, such as a hormone imbalance brought on by prostate surgery or radiation therapy for prostate cancer or other types of surgery for cancer of the pelvis.

Psychological issues can occasionally be associated with erectile dysfunction. Certainly stress in the marriage or on the job, and other types of issues can cause ED. Depression may also be associated with or cause ED.

On rare occasions, trauma or injuries to the crotch area can cause ED. There have been suggestions that men who are chronic or avid bicycle riders can become impotent from this activity. Some manufacturers have tried to respond with more "user-friendly" seats for male bike riders, although their effectiveness has not been established.

An array of drugs, counseling, injections and even surgery that help erectile dysfunction. But patients also should consider changing lifestyles. Consider:

- stopping smoking;
- losing weight;
• exercising;
• eating a healthy diet;
• keeping their blood pressure, weight and cholesterol under control;
• controlling diabetes.

Tags: Allen Seftel, University Hospitals Case Medical Center

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