

Managing Erectile Dysfunction From the Partner's Perspective

Erectile dysfunction (ED) is a condition that not only affects a man, it also affects his sexual partner(s). As with many things related to one's sexual health, ED can be a sensitive subject, and one that is not necessarily easy to broach in conversation.

Therefore, it may be helpful for partners of men with ED to have a few strategies on how to best approach the situation, support their partner, and maintain their own sexual health. The following suggestions are just that.

- **Make time to discuss the matter.** As uncomfortable as it may feel at first, couples who are able to talk about ED and the feelings that go along with it are better poised to work through the issue and find solutions together. Honest communication is the cornerstone of any healthy relationship, and this extends to matters of sexual health as well. It is important to note, however, that bringing up this conversation in the bedroom may compound feelings of shame and anxiety for the individual with ED. Instead, find another time to address the topic when both individuals are clothed and calm.
- **Learn about ED and its treatments.** A quick internet search should be enough to reassure couples dealing with ED that they are not alone. ED is a common problem that affects men all around the world. Fortunately, this means that there are several treatment options available for this condition, including sex therapy, oral medications, vacuum erection devices, injection therapies, and penile implants. Although looking into potential treatment options for ED may feel daunting, there are many tools and health care professionals who can help. For example, resources such as the [HARD: The Fight to Solve ED](#) video series can help clear up misinformation around ED and explain the implications of getting a penile implant.
- **Make an appointment to meet with a health care provider.** Whether an individual with ED prefers to visit a health care provider alone or with his partner, it is important that he does so. ED can be an early indicator of other serious health problems like heart disease, so it is a good idea for the individual to have a medical checkup. What's more, health care professionals can help couples identify the cause of ED and select an appropriate treatment option.
- **Experiment with intimacy.** While it is okay to want to resume sexual intercourse eventually, a couple's intimate connection is about more than penetrative sex that requires an erection. Practicing oral sex, using sex toys, reading or watching erotica together, kissing, hugging, and exchanging massages are all ways to spark intimacy and deepen a couple's sexual connection.

These are just a few ideas for how partners of men with ED can support their partners and themselves while making strides to address the issue. A sexual medicine provider or mental health professional can also help couples as they navigate the challenges of ED.

References:

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