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Bu bilgi, kolay okunurluk veya büyük baskılar gibi alternatif biçimlerde sunulabilir, ve talep üzerine Alternatif Dillerde sunulabilir. Daha fazla bilgi için klinik ekibinizle irtibata geçin.

میں پر پڑھنے کے لیے جیسا ہے، سہولتی جاکے دستے کیاب میں فارم پر مبادل معلومات پر پرنٹ یا آسان اور درخواست پر مبادل زبانوں میں بھی دستیاب ہو سکتی ہیں۔ مزید معلومات کے لیے، اپنی کلینکل ٹیم سے بات کریں!

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Patient information

Low sex drive



Introduction

Everyone may experience “low sex drive” at some point in their lives. This is when you generally don’t have a desire for sex and you are unlikely to become aroused. It’s completely normal to feel less interested in sex during busy times, or times of high stress. In most cases when the stress or busy-ness is removed, people will start to feel like they can get back into the habit and enjoyment of sex again.

It’s also very common for couples to have different levels of sex drive. One partner may want to have sex every day and the other partner may want to have sex only once per week. This doesn’t necessarily mean that someone has low (or high) sex drive – they may just be different. When this happens, one partner may feel frustrated and rejected and the other may feel pressurized and guilty. It’s really important to find ways to communicate about what’s going on. It’s important to find some reasons for this difference, and to discuss how a compromise can be found.

Some people report they have never been particularly interested in sex. If this does not bother them, then we would not consider it to be a problem. However if someone is concerned about their lack of interest in sex, it may be helpful to explore the reasons why, either through self-help or through sexual wellbeing services.

Helpful resources

Sexual wellbeing resources

- The Joy of Sex (Comfort & Quilliam)
- Orgasms for Two (Betty Dodson)
- The New Male Sexuality (Silbergeld)
- Enjoy Sex (How, when and if you want to): A Practical and Inclusive Guide (Meg Barker)

Psychological / relationship difficulties

- The Happiness Trap (Russ Harris)
- ACT with Love (Russ Harris)
- Rewriting the Rules (Meg Barker)
- Recovering from Trauma using Compassion Focused Therapy (Deborah Lee & Sophie James)
- Building Your Confidence with Compassion Focused Therapy (Mary Welford)

Unwanted sexual experiences

Experiencing rape or sexual assault can be a reason for diminished sex drive. These experiences are likely to trigger very high levels of anxiety, stress and fear, which can physically prevent your body from becoming aroused. It is very normal to experience these high levels of fear and anxiety in the months after the event. However, with time and support many people find their fears start to reduce and they are able to connect with their sexual side again. Taking things slowly and communicating with partners can be very helpful. However, if after some months you find that you continue to feel very highly anxious and fearful (or low in mood), then you may need some further psychological support.

This support can be accessed through your GP, through **The Havens** <https://www.thehavens.org.uk/> or through charities such as **Rape Crisis** <https://rapecrisis.org.uk/>. If you are particularly concerned about your sexual wellbeing, then the Psychology Service at Barts Health Sexual Wellbeing Service can provide specialist psychosexual therapy.

Common Reasons for low sex drive

Common reasons for “low sex drive” or differences in sex drive can include things like busy work, personal stress at home, medical conditions, psychological difficulties such as depression or anxiety or difficulties with the relationship.

Some of these issues might resolve by themselves, whereas others may resolve with some help. However, some may be unlikely to change. Where there is a difficulty that may change with help, seeking appropriate support for the difficulty (e.g. relationship counseling or psychological therapy) may then lead to improvements in your sex life.

Just too busy!

Being too busy is a very common reason for “low sex drive”. When being busy is unlikely to change (e.g. busy job or family life), it may be helpful to plan and schedule in time for intimacy with your partner. Although at first this may not feel as “sexy” as spontaneous sex, it can help your mind and body get back into the habit of sex. We tend to think of sex drive as something that builds up or reduces with habit – when your body gets used to not having sex then desire and arousal are less likely to happen. However once you start having sex again, sexual desire and sexual arousal will often start to occur more readily (and sometimes spontaneously!).

Relationship difficulties/psychological difficulties

Where relationship difficulties or psychological difficulties may be leading to less interest in sex, it can be helpful to seek support to help with the specific difficulty.

For relationship difficulties, you may find help and ideas from websites or self-help books (see resources section). Relationship counseling can sometimes help (e.g. <https://www.relate.org.uk>).

For psychological difficulties such as depression and anxiety, you can ask your GP to refer you to local psychology services, or to give you advice on finding a private therapist. Alternatively you can look at self-help guides and websites, which provide ideas and strategies that you may find helpful in managing the difficulty (see resources section).

Difficult experiences and confidence

For some people, difficult experiences with sex reduce sex drive.

For example, if women experience pain during sex, they might find their sex drive diminishes over time. If this is the case, please see our leaflet on Painful Sex. Men who experience difficulties with obtaining and maintaining erections may also find that their sex drive reduces over time (please see our leaflet on Erectile Difficulties).

Some people may find that previous experiences with sex have left them feeling unconfident about sex, which then can lead to having and wanting less sex. Although many of us think that enjoyable sex should be automatic and “natural”, sex is actually something that we all *learn* to do... very much like walking, talking and eating! (These took most of us some years to perfect!) Although the drive for sex may be “natural”, the skills of sex (giving and receiving pleasure) can take many years of practice both alone and with a partner.

If you are worried about your sexual “performance”, then it can be helpful to talk this through with someone who you feel comfortable with, whether a friend, a supportive partner or a psychologist. There are many ways to build up your confidence about sex, for example reading self-help guides (see our resources page), having open conversations with your partner about your likes and dislikes... and practice!