

## What you Need to Know

- It is common to experience side effects that impact your sexual functioning.
- Sexual health is important for quality of life for most people.
- You are not alone, and there are resources to help.
- Tell a member or your patient care team about any changes you experience.
- Though you may not care about this right now, we know early detection of sexual side effects will increase the likelihood of resolving any problems.



## Resources

Sexual health care can involve many aspects of your well-being, including physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health. Here are some resources and support to consider:

- Counseling
- Sex Therapy
- Social Work
- Physical Therapy
- Ostomy Care
- Gynecology
- Urology
- Support Groups

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More Information



After Cancer  
Solutions for Sexual Health

# YOUR SEXUAL HEALTH AND CANCER



## Contact Us

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“When they first told me I had cancer, sex was the last thing on my mind. But now I wonder, could getting help sooner have made a difference?”



## Intimacy -Physical Or Emotional

### Do you know the difference and why it matters?

We may not all think of intimacy the same way, though we all want to feel an attachment or closeness to others. Physical intimacy is commonly referred to as sexual intimacy, while emotional intimacy is described to be something totally different... but is it?

Emotional intimacy is all about our emotional connection and attachment with others. It is a special connection at a deep level but requires no physical contact. Emotional intimacy can be enhanced by physical touch, but it can also be the motivator for sexual desire.



## Common Problems

- Changes in energy level, body image, confidence, and relationship roles may be experienced by anyone who has been impacted by cancer.
- Problems may be specific to penetrative sex, erection, ejaculation, vaginal dryness, inability to orgasm, or pain during sex. Other concerns are related to feeling less attractive, a loss of desire, or periods of extreme fatigue.
- Some problems resolve after treatment, while others may be persistent and long lasting.
- Relationships are often affected by cancer treatment, causing partners to have their own need for information and support.

## Sexual Scripts

Cancer treatment can influence how we think and feel about ourselves as sexual beings. Your sexual script is the way you and your partner express intimacy and affection to one another. Your script is what you do to transition from a non-sexual interaction to a sexual one.

It may be difficult to follow the same script after treatment. Your desire may be different, and physical changes impact your ability to have sex the same way as before.

Communicating with a partner about these changes is a first step to figuring out how to rewrite your sexual script and be comfortable and confident about intimacy again.



## Questions for Your Doctor

- How will my cancer therapy affect my sex life?
- Is it safe for me and my partner to have sex during my treatment?
- What can I do before, during, or after my treatment to lessen the negative on my sexual functioning?
- What can my partner expect from the sexual health side effects?
- What changes should I be watching for?
- What resources are available to address the changes my intimate relationships?
- What have other patients,undergoing the same treatment found helpful for sexual side effects?

## About After Cancer

Our goal is to empower patients and provide educational resources for patient care teams on addressing sexual side effects from diagnosis through survivorship. We provide solutions for sexual health so you have the information you need to be in charge.