



Loss of Libido

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Libido is your desire for sex or “sexual drive.” Loss of libido is when you have a less than normal sex drive for you. It is common to have loss of libido while getting cancer treatment.

What causes loss of libido?

The loss of libido can happen to anyone. Sometimes physical and emotional effects of cancer treatments can lead to loss of libido. Treatments that can affect your libido are:

- Hormone therapy.
- Some surgeries.
- Medication for pain.

Side effects from cancer treatments that can affect your libido are:

- Depression.
- Nausea or pain.
- Fatigue.
- Changes in body image.
- Stress.
- Erectile dysfunction (not being able to get or keep an erection) in males.
- Vaginal dryness in females.

How is loss of libido managed?

Managing loss of libido depends on what is causing it. Some things that might help if you are having loss of libido are:

- Be intimate without the pressure to have sex. You can hold hands, talk, massage, and kiss.
- Talk openly with your partner.
- Limit alcohol.
- Exercise regularly, if you can. Exercise increases blood flow, energy, and endorphins.
- Do not smoke. Cigarette smoking reduces blood flow throughout the body.
- Rest and avoid heavy meals before sexual activity to help with fatigue.

Your care provider may also prescribe medications to help. Do not take medication to improve your libido without talking to your provider because this could have an impact on certain types of cancer or cancer treatment.

When should I call my care team?

If you or your partner is upset by loss of libido, talk to your care provider. It can be hard to discuss sexuality, but your providers are here to help!

References

More to explore

Looking for more information on this or similar topics?

These articles could be helpful to you.

Female Sexual Health and Cancer

Male Sexual Health and Cancer