



The Link Between Depression and ED

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Depression and Erectile Dysfunction

Erectile dysfunction almost always has organic and psychological components. Factors such as aging and the declining testosterone levels that come with it, medical conditions and medications prescribed to manage them, as well as depressive illnesses, can all contribute to the development of ED. And it's not uncommon – ED is a condition that currently affects more than half of men aged 40-70. All forms of depression can cause ED, not just major depressive episodes. The comparatively common mild depression, sometimes called dysthymia, can also cause ED in men.

Causes

The link between depression and ED is a complex one, indicates a 2000 research paper from New York's Columbia University. Loss of libido is a common symptom of depression. In addition, an individual with depression will also experience sleep and appetite disturbances, low energy, feeling sad, and often a desire to be alone, all of which will impact on a man's ability to perform sexually.

Antidepressants used to treat depression and are well known for their side effects, which include decreased libido, erectile dysfunction, delayed orgasms or inability to have an orgasm. Medication for heart disease and high cholesterol are also associated with these side effects.

Additionally, while depression often leads to ED, the opposite can also be true. ED is a blow to a man's self esteem and can make him frustrated, angry and upset. Thus, a man who experiences ED due to another cause may subsequently become depressed.

Overcoming ED

- **Consider All Possibilities** – Erectile dysfunction can be triggered by various factors besides depression; being overweight, diabetes, smoking, alcohol consumption, relationship problems and anxiety are all triggers. If you are struggling with ED, consider all of these factors and how you can mitigate them. Consider therapy in addition to medication. The combination of the two is very effective in combatting depression and anxiety, and therapy can also help with relationship problems and quitting smoking and drinking.
- **Try Different Medication** – Ask your doctor to evaluate whether or not ED may be due to the side effect of a drug you are taking. If this is the case, ask if an alternate medication (less likely to cause such side effects) can be prescribed.
- **Seek Support** – Attend a support group or join an online community and learn how other men in the same situation are coping with ED. These forums are great for exchanging information about latest research or treatments in this field, as well as providing a reminder that you're not the only person going through this.
- **Sex Coaching** – This is a relatively new field and is different from sex therapy. Sex coaches can help you

maximize your sexual potential regardless of the root cause of ED. You can attend sessions with a sex coach with or without your partner and they can teach you various techniques designed to boost your confidence, eliminate negative beliefs and better enjoy sex.