

Sexuality & Treatment Toolkit

Health care teams do not always discuss sexuality with people receiving treatment, yet sexuality is an important part of our lives. Some dedicated cancer centers employ a Sexologist to help the patients during their journey.

We have collected valuable tips and information from other Belongers who discuss the most common sexual problems experienced during or after treatment.

Questions to ask the specialist:

- ❖ What are the most common sexual problems to expect?
- ❖ At what stage of treatment may these changes occur?
- ❖ How long could these problems last, and will any of these problems be permanent?
- ❖ Is there any way to prevent, treat, or manage these changes?
- ❖ What precautions should be taken as a couple during treatment? For example, is a condom necessary? If so, for how long?
- ❖ Are there any types of sex I should avoid?
- ❖ Should, the possibility of pregnancy be avoided? If so, what are the recommended types of contraception?
- ❖ Can my medications or treatment be passed to my partner through my body fluids.

Best tips given by other users

- ❖ Include your partner in the decisions of therapies, treatments, or devices. This encourages emotional closeness.
- ❖ Introducing sexual stimulation aids to help get you from arousal to orgasm may become an exciting time for both you and your partner.
- ❖ Remain open-minded about ways to feel sexual pleasure other than sexual intercourse using touch, cuddling, and stroking.
- ❖ Experiment with new ways to give and receive sexual pleasure.
- ❖ Remind yourself that it took time to learn to enjoy sex when you first started having sex. Allow yourself the time to explore and learn how to feel pleasure during and after cancer treatment.
- ❖ Be kind to yourself, stress may affect your ability to enjoy sex.

- ❖ If you are experiencing pain elsewhere in the body and intimacy is on the card, try using pain medicine an hour or so before having sex.
- ❖ Self-stimulation (or masturbation) may be helpful. It can help you learn where you might be tender or sore and allow you to share this information with your partner.
- ❖ Men who have surgery involving the pelvic area (prostate, testicular and penile cancers, colorectal and anal cancers), may need to allow extra time for healing before having sex that involves penile stimulation or penetration.
- ❖ Do not give up on each other. It may take some time, effort, and communication to find new ways to explore and enjoy your partner again.

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