

About Your Prostate Cancer Treatment

Hormone Therapy



Hormone therapy, also called Androgen Deprivation Therapy (ADT), works by blocking testosterone, a hormone that is thought to help cancer grow.

How will hormone therapy affect your sex life?

Every kind of prostate cancer treatment causes changes to sexual function. Here are some ways hormone therapy may affect your sex life:

What can you do about the sexual side effects?

- Your doctor can prescribe medications or devices to help you have erections.
- A certified sex therapist can help you find a way to stay sexually active. In the US, you can find a certified sex therapist near you through the website for the American Association of Sexuality Educators, Counselors and Therapists – aasect.org.

Lower sex drive

- Loss of testosterone usually lowers your sex drive.
- If your hormone treatment is temporary, your sex drive may return about 6 months after ending treatment.
- Some men may not get back to a normal testosterone level even after stopping hormone therapy, and their sex drive may stay lower.

Genital shrinkage

- When your hormone levels decrease, you may notice that your testicles or penis get smaller.

Problems with erections (Erectile dysfunction / ED)

- ED usually starts within six weeks of treatment.
- If you have to stay on hormone therapy long-term, ED may be permanent.
- If your therapy is short-term, you may see recovery of erections about six months after stopping treatment.

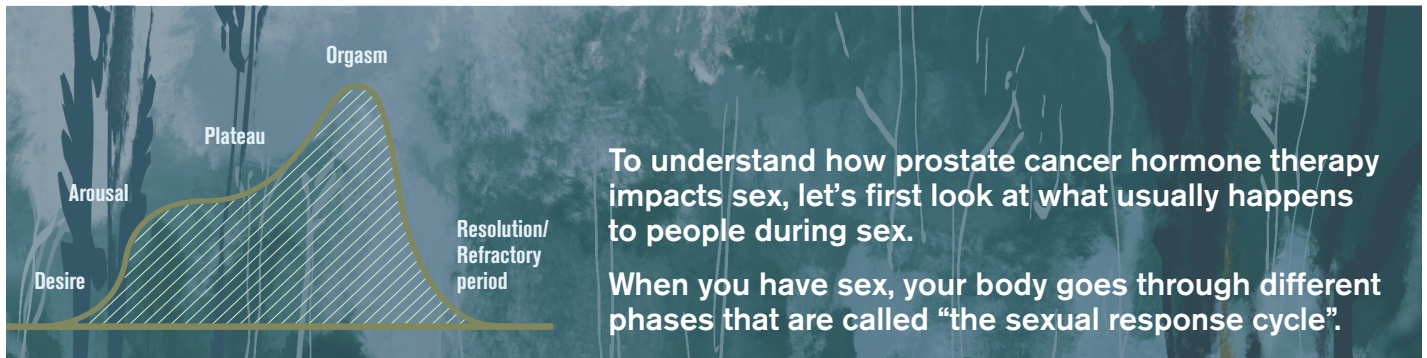
Trouble having an orgasm

- Low testosterone can make it harder for some men to reach orgasm.
- When you reach orgasm, less semen will come out.



Sexual Recovery

What is sex like after hormone therapy?



What **usually** happens to a man's body during sex?

What **changes** after prostate cancer treatment?

Desire

- Desire develops and grows when we think about sex, have fantasies about sexual situations, enjoying those thoughts and begin to imagine making it happen.

After prostate cancer treatment

- Many men have a lower sex drive (desire).
- If hormone treatment is temporary, your sex drive may come back about 6 months after stopping treatment.
- Sex drive may stay lower for some men even after stopping hormone therapy.

Arousal

- The body reacts to those thoughts and gets ready for sex.
- Heart starts pumping a bit faster.
- Blood pressure goes a bit higher.
- Breathing gets heavier.
- Blood begins to flow to sexually sensitive areas of the body.
- Men get an erection.

After prostate cancer treatment

- You may feel less sensitivity in your penis and you will need longer stimulation.
- You may not be able to get an erection on your own.
- You can still have erections with the help of aids like vacuum pumps, penile suppositories, injections or pills.

Plateau

- The body gets ready to have an orgasm.
- Excitement builds with stimulation and the feeling of pleasure.
- The body begins to tense up.
- Men's testicles withdraw up into the scrotum and the erection becomes very hard.

After prostate cancer treatment

- It may take longer to reach orgasm.

Orgasm

- The body suddenly releases sexual tension.
- Muscles in the pelvic floor contract or spasm.
- Men release semen.

After prostate cancer treatment

- You may have trouble reaching orgasm.
- When you reach orgasm, less semen will come out.

Resolution / Refractory Period

- The body relaxes.
- Muscles relax, blood pressure drops, there is a feeling of satisfaction and wellbeing.
- Men usually need recovery time before they can reach orgasm again.
- If the orgasm is experienced with a partner, couples often feel relaxed and connected.

After prostate cancer treatment

- You will need to wait longer before you can reach orgasm again. You will still feel relaxation and pleasure after orgasm.

