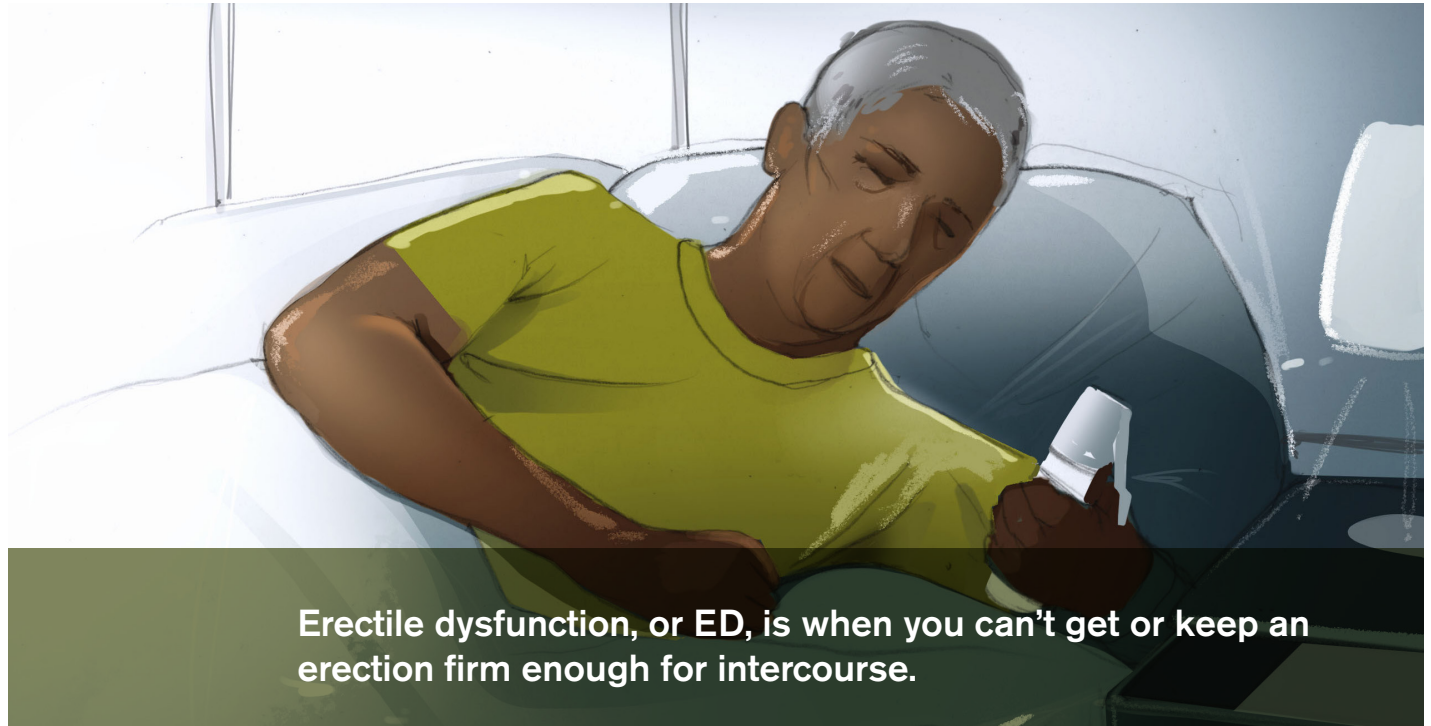


# Sexual Recovery

## Erectile Dysfunction & Penile Rehabilitation



Erectile dysfunction, or ED, is when you can't get or keep an erection firm enough for intercourse.

Almost all men who get treatment for prostate cancer will have some erectile dysfunction at some point.

ED from prostate cancer treatment can happen due to:

- Damage to nerves near the prostate that help erections happen
- Poor blood flow into the penis
- Inability to keep blood in the penis during an erection
- Anxiety or depression about performance

### When will ED start, and what will happen over time?

It depends on your treatment.

**Prostate cancer surgery:** ED starts right away.

**Hormone therapy:** ED usually starts within six weeks of starting treatment.

**Radiation treatment:** ED may start gradually after several months.

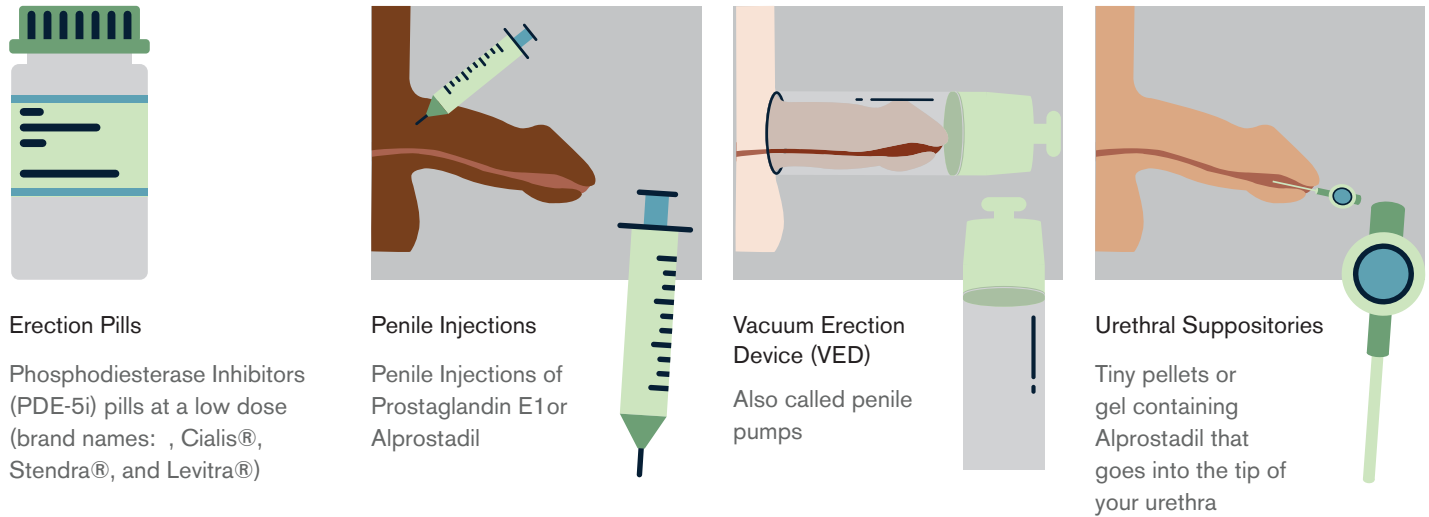
Depending on your treatment, erectile dysfunction may or may not get better over time. You can still have erections with the help of medication or devices. You'll be able to stay sexually active and have penetrative sex if you want to.

#### Erections lose firmness, depending on:

- How strong your erections were before treatment.
- Your age.
- If you have other medical problems that affect sexual function, like heart disease or diabetes.
- Your lifestyle (smoking and not exercising will make ED worse).
- Your medications (for example, beta-blockers can cause problems with erections [if you had nerve-sparing surgery.
- Your willingness to work on penile rehabilitation.



Fig 1. Penile Rehab Tools



### Erection Pills

Phosphodiesterase Inhibitors (PDE-5i) pills at a low dose (brand names: , Cialis®, Stendra®, and Levitra®)

### Penile Injections

Penile Injections of Prostaglandin E1 or Alprostadil

### Vacuum Erection Device (VED)

Also called penile pumps

### Urethral Suppositories

Tiny pellets or gel containing Alprostadil that goes into the tip of your urethra

## Penile rehabilitation

### Why is penile rehabilitation important?

Penile rehabilitation is an important way to keep your penis healthy after prostate cancer treatment. No one knows exactly how penile rehabilitation helps, but some scientists suggest that it:

- Promotes regular blood flow to the penis, which helps keep erectile tissues of the penis healthy.
- Preserves penis length.

### What is penile rehabilitation?

Doing penile rehabilitation means using medicines or devices to help keep erectile tissues of the penis healthy after prostate cancer treatment.

- You can think of it as physical therapy or exercise like you might do after knee replacement surgery.
- Penile rehabilitation is separate from having sex with another person and it's something you can do on your own.

However, if you have an interested partner, they can help you do the exercises.

### Penile rehabilitation is done using various methods and can include, alone and in combination: (Fig 1.)

- Erection Pills
- Penile Injections
- Vacuum Erection Device (VED)
- Urethral Suppositories

All these methods have potential side-effects. Some have to be taught under medical supervision. Ask your doctor what type of penile rehabilitation they would recommend for you, based on your overall health.

This may seem intimidating at first, but you can be taught how to use the tools. Many men find them helpful.

### When should I start?

Talk to your doctor first so you can be sure it's medically safe to start penile rehabilitation.

