

Sexual Recovery

Sex After Prostate Cancer



After prostate cancer treatment, most men want to get back to being sexually active.

After prostate cancer treatment, men usually have difficulties with having sex the way they're used to. Erections don't work well, libido may be low, and couples realize that their familiar ways of making love don't work. Many men and couples want to recover their sex lives even when the body does not work as well. They want to gain confidence in making love in a new way. We call that 'sexual recovery.'

What is sexual recovery?

Most men who go through prostate cancer treatment don't get back to where they were in terms of ability to have erections. Even so, many couples can get back to being sexually active and feeling satisfied with their sex lives. Learning how to use sexual aids and relying on personal and relationship strengths can help make it work.

Things might not come naturally at first, but there may be benefits.

When sex becomes 'work', you may feel like giving up. This is a normal part of grieving, and can be overcome. Remember that you're learning new ways to be intimate and it's an adjustment, but you can get through

it. Some couples say that working together on how to make their sexual relationships work in this new situation has helped them become emotionally closer which in turn makes sex better.





Sexual Recovery: Sex After Prostate Cancer

What might get in your way?

- **Recovery takes time.** It's important to have realistic expectations about your recovery. If you're overly optimistic, you may feel disappointment. Remember that recovery is a process that takes time.
- **Change is difficult.** At first, you may feel uncomfortable with using sexual aids. You may feel angry that you have to use the aids to have sex. You may also feel upset that sex is less spontaneous. This will get better with time. Getting familiar with the sexual aids will help you stay on track with penile rehabilitation, and feel more confident during sex.
- **It affects both the man and the partner.** You may feel like you're letting your partner down. Partners may be unsure about how to help, how to talk about sex, and may feel guilty about their own desire to be sexual. Try to be patient with one another as you get through the process.

Here are some initial steps in that have helped men and couples in their sexual recovery:

