

## Supported Self-Management

### How to manage erectile dysfunction

This video will talk about the management and causes of erectile dysfunction that you may experience after treatment for prostate cancer.

#### What is erectile dysfunction?

Erectile Dysfunction or impotence is when you are unable to achieve or maintain an erection that is sufficient for sexual intercourse or sexual activity.

It is caused when nerve signals from your brain are interfered with, affecting the blood supply or desire for sex (libido) making it difficult to get or keep an erection.

Other factors associated with erectile dysfunction include

- Arousal problems
- Inability to orgasm
- Inability to ejaculate
- Painful ejaculation
- Change in penis size

Early treatment of erectile dysfunction will help limit and prevent some of these symptoms.

#### What causes erectile problems?

Some treatments for prostate cancer can damage the nerves and blood vessels that are needed for an erection. However, not everyone will experience problems with erectile dysfunction following treatment. The prostate cancer treatments include:

- Radical surgery
- Brachytherapy
- Radiotherapy
- Hormonal therapy
- High Intensity Focused Ultrasound and
- Cryotherapy

It is the treatment for prostate cancer that causes the problems not the disease itself. Erectile dysfunction is a symptom not a disease.

Factors affecting erectile dysfunction:

- Damage to the cavernous nerve and blood vessels
- Psychological consequences
- Pre existing erectile dysfunction

Other health problems can also cause erection problems. These include:

- Hypertension
- High cholesterol
- Diabetes
- Heart problems
- Hormonal problems
- Prostate conditions

- Neurological conditions such as epilepsy, stroke, multiple sclerosis or Parkinson's disease
- Certain medications and lifestyle
- Depression or anxiety
- Spinal problems
- Renal transplant and dialysis

### **Treatment for erection problems**

There are several different treatment options available, which work in different ways:

- Tablets or oral medication such as Sildenafil (Viagra), Tadalafil (Cialis), Avanafil (Spedra) and Vardenafil (Levitra).
- Vacuum pump
- Penile injections
- Urethral pellets or creams
- Psychosexual therapy
- Penile implant
- Self-help

Erectile dysfunction may be helped by making lifestyle changes which reduce the risk factors. Keeping a healthy weight, stopping smoking, exercising regularly, reducing alcohol intake and doing pelvic floor exercises may help improve erections.

It can be difficult talking about sex. But talking to your healthcare team will get you the treatment and support you and or your partner need. You can also access more information: [Sex and relationships | Prostate Cancer UK](#)

### **Further Support**

If you would like to discuss aspects of this video or have any concerns, please contact your healthcare team. Useful links can also be found in your handbook.

Prostate Cancer UK offer a sexual support service to support you and your partner with any questions you may have: [Sexual Support Service](#)

**Thank you**