

Medicines for depression or other mental disorders and difficulties with sex (sexual dysfunction)

This information sheet will help you understand more about the effect of some medicines on sexual function. It is not a substitute for talking with your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

Difficulties with sex (sexual dysfunction) usually fit into one of these categories.

- Sexual desire disorders such as decreased sex drive (libido).
- Sexual arousal disorders such as erectile dysfunction.
- Orgasm disorders such as premature ejaculation and failure of ejaculation.
- Sexual pain disorders such as involuntary tightening of the vagina preventing penetration (vaginismus).

Can depression cause difficulties with sex?

Yes, around 70 percent (seven in every ten) of people with severe depression have some difficulties with sex. Usually this is decreased sex drive. Treatment with antidepressant medicines often brings the person's sex drive back to normal (for them), but may cause other problems.

Talk to your doctor about any difficulties with sex that bothers you, before you start treatment.

Can other mental disorders cause difficulties with sex?

Yes, all types of sex difficulties may occur. The number of people affected is not known.

Talk to your doctor about any difficulties with sex that bothers you, before you start treatment.

Which medicines can cause difficulties with sex?

Some medicines used to treat depression and other mental disorders can cause difficulties with sex. The medicines that most often cause these problems are listed in the table on the right.

What kinds of difficulties can be caused by these medicines?

- Women taking medicines for depression most often have problems with arousal.

- Women taking medicines for other mental disorders most often have problems with vaginal lubrication.
- Men taking medicines for depression most often have orgasm disorders and continuing low sex drive.
- Men taking medicines for other mental disorders most often have problems with erections.

This is only a problem if it bothers you.

What should I do if I'm having these problems?

Keep taking your medicine.

Talk to your doctor about the problems you are experiencing, especially if they are bothering you.

Your doctor will investigate the cause. If your medicine is the problem there are different options your doctor may suggest. These include reducing the dose of your medicine, changing to a different medicine, counselling or using a medicine to treat the problem.

Report your experience to the Centre for Adverse Reactions Monitoring

<https://nzphvc.otago.ac.nz/report/>

Medicines for depression or other mental disorders that may cause difficulties with sex

Often cause difficulties	Sometimes cause difficulties
Sertraline	Escitalopram
Venlafaxine	Imipramine
Citalopram	Quetiapine
Paroxetine	Clozapine
Risperidone	
Haloperidol	
Olanzapine	