

# Prostate Cancer and Erectile Function

## *Answers to your questions*

*This handout answers questions about erectile function after treatment for prostate cancer.*

### **Is it common to have problems with erections after treatment for prostate cancer?**

Yes, many men have *erectile dysfunction* (problems keeping an erection long enough to have intercourse) after having treatment for prostate cancer. Your experience will depend on the type of prostate cancer and treatment you had.

### **What causes erectile dysfunction?**

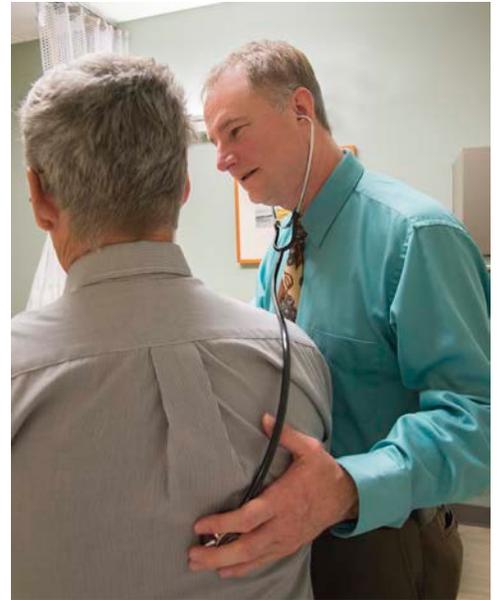
Erectile issues can be caused by:

- Cancer and other diseases of the prostate
- High blood pressure
- Diabetes
- High cholesterol
- Surgery
- Radiation

### **How does cancer treatment affect the prostate?**

Surgery or radiation treatment for prostate cancer can injure the nerves and blood vessels that are involved in erections.

Over the years, advances in technology have improved results for many men. But it is still very common to have erectile problems after treatment for prostate cancer.



*Talk with your care provider if you have any questions about whether a certain treatment for erectile dysfunction is safe for you.*

## Can erectile dysfunction be treated?

There are several treatments that can help restore your erectile function. These treatment methods range from oral medicines to surgery.

Talk with your doctor about these treatments to make sure they are safe and practical for you:

### Oral Medicines

Oral medicines such as Viagra, Levitra, or Cialis are often the first treatment option. Each of these drugs helps increase blood flow to the penis during sexual stimulation.

These medicines are safe and effective for most patients. But, these are prescription medicines with possible side effects. If you are using nitrates for chest pain, be sure to talk with your doctor before using any of these medicines.

### Other Options

If you have tried medicines and want other options for restoring erectile function, talk with your doctor about:

- Sex therapy
- Vacuum erectile device (VED)
- Intracorporal injections (ICI)
- Urethral suppositories
- Penile prosthesis placement

### To Learn More

- To find a specialist in erectile restoration, visit the University of Washington Department of Urology website:  
<http://depts.washington.edu/uroweb/treatments.php>
- To learn about non-medicine treatments, visit the Sexual Medicine Society of North America website:  
[www.sexhealthmatters.org/erectile-dysfunction/treating-erectile-dysfunction](http://www.sexhealthmatters.org/erectile-dysfunction/treating-erectile-dysfunction)

### Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns.

Prostate Cancer Prevention  
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