

## Sex Problems in Women

### What are some types of sex problems that women might have?

- Having pain during sex.
- Not becoming aroused or “excited” during sex.
- Not having an orgasm during sex.
- Not wanting to have sex (also called “decreased libido”).

Sometimes problems can come and go and might not cause concern. Your provider can help if you don’t know why you are having sex or pain problems or are worried.

### What can cause sex problems?

- Stress
- Relationship issues
- Childbirth
- Menopause
- Dryness or pain in the vagina.
- Pain in the pelvic area. This can be from infection, surgery or endometriosis.
- Changes in the muscles near and around the vagina.
- Mood problems, such as depression.
- Medical problems, such as cancer or heart disease.
- Side effect of medicines such as antidepressants or medicines used to treat heart disease.

### What can I do on my own to improve my sex problem? This depends on the cause.

If you are having relationship problems, you can try to:

- **Communicate** with your partner on how to make sex better.
- Try to have more **routine** “date nights”.
- Use **resources**, such as reading books or websites about sex.
- Seek **counseling**, either on your own or with your partner.

If you are having dryness or pain during sex, you can try:

- Vaginal lubricants (ask your provider for a list of lubricants).
- Vaginal moisturizers several times a week.

It is important to stay as healthy as possible. Women who feel healthy and happy are more likely to be happy with their sex life. It is important to talk to your provider about any concerns.

**How are sex problems treated?** Again, this is dependent on the cause.

- Using vaginal lubrications, moisturizers or a prescription cream (usually estrogen) to treat vaginal dryness.
- Getting treatment for mood problems if you have mood problems.
- Working with your provider to changes medicines you may be taking that could be causing sex problems.
- Having physical therapy to work on the muscles around your vagina so that you do not have pain during sex.

You might hear about medicines that can help some women with “decreased libido.” There are 2 medicines that are approved in the United States. Both medicines must be prescribed by a provider. Consult with your provider if these options are best for you. They can help some women want to have sex more. But there can be serious side effects. In most cases, providers recommend trying other things to improve your relationship and sex life before trying medicine.

**Some treatments or over the counter remedies are NOT recommended by providers. They are not always safe. They can even contain harmful elements. It is best to talk to your provider if you want to know more about treatment options.**