

# SaferSex4Seniors

Information you need to enjoy safer sexual pleasure!

## Sex Shouldn't Hurt

Unless you're turned on by pain, you probably find sex more enjoyable when you can focus on pleasure. Some causes of sexual pain can be easily remedied; others require sex therapy or medical assessment and treatment. And sometimes, if the pain is chronic, you may need to redefine sex so it features physical sensations you still find pleasurable.

Pain is the body's way of asking you to put the brakes on and ask questions. Do you need more lubrication? A different position? A slower pace? If pain occurs regularly, get a urogenital exam (male) or pelvic exam (female) to get a medical opinion on possible causes of your pain.

**Q. I have been a single woman for a 10 years, and when I recently had sex with a man I'm dating, it hurt, a lot. He felt awful, and I was mortified. What can we do?**

If it's been 10 years since you had sex, you may have jumped into intercourse before your body was ready. Try more pre-penetrative sex play to allow yourself and your partner to get very physically aroused. Also, your vagina may be out of shape due to lack of attention. The muscles, tissues and blood vessels in your genitals and vagina need exercise, and without it, the muscles get weak and inflexible, and lubrication, which may already be decreased due to menopause, flows even less.

Schedule a pelvic exam and speak openly about what you were doing when you felt pain. If everything checks out OK, try some at-home rehabilitation to get your body ready for sex. You'll find some great suggestions in the FAQ on this website titled 10 Tips for Hot Solo Sex. You can involve your partner in your rehabilitation project, too!

Other reasons for female sexual pain include muscles that clamp shut involuntarily, yeast infections, skin conditions, and sexually transmitted infections. Internal conditions like endometriosis (scar tissue), fibroids (benign tumors), and cysts can cause pain with penetration. All of these require medical attention to diagnose and treat.

**Q. My male partner and I used to have a great sex life, but he says it hurts now, and he doesn't want to have sex. I try to be understanding, but it's putting a strain on our relationship. I want him to enjoy it again, and I don't want to be abstinent.**

It's a good sign that he used to enjoy sex because his problem may be treatable with medical care. Causes of male sexual pain include yeast or urethritis, prostatitis, bladder infection, sexually transmitted infections, skin conditions, Peyronie's disease, to name a few. Ask him to get a medical exam. If he's physically OK yet doesn't want sex, invite him to visit a sex therapist with you. If he refuses, go by yourself. Also, try reconsidering what "having sex" means. Maybe he's willing to perform oral sex on you, in exchange for a great massage. Maybe he needs a different kind of touch. It may help to watch each other masturbate so you can learn how to touch him without causing pain.

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