

# Sex & Intimacy



People who live with a chronic health problem face a challenge in keeping this important part of their life alive. Fear of injury, fear of increasing symptoms, fear of failure can dampen desire for something that is supposed to be joyful and pleasurable, not scary or uncomfortable.

In some cases, however, health problems may actually improve your sex life by causing you to experiment with new types of physical and emotional stimulation for you are your partner.

Clear communication is very important to be aware of individual needs and wishes.

Spend more time on sensuality or foreplay and intimate touches and cuddles; less on actual intercourse. This process of exploring sensuality with your partner can open communications and strengthen your relationship.

## Overcoming fear during sex:

**Communication, communication, communication!**

Share what kind of physical stimulation, positions or fantasies you prefer.

## Sensuality with touch

Skin is the largest organ in the body and is rich with sensory nerves, the right touch on almost any area can be very erotic, and it can be enhanced with use of oils, lotions, feathers, fur – turn your imagination loose! Set the mood with candles and music and experiment laughing off any misguided attempts.

Intimacy can be intense without the need for intercourse, mastering the art of sensual touch is a life bonus.

## Overcoming Symptoms during Sex

You may need the help of lubricants if vaginal moisture is less than in the past. Some chronic illnesses

and some medications can cause erection problems and may need some help with medication and or other aids. Plan ahead and take medication in a timely fashion to enjoy an intimate time and sex with less pain and reduced anxiety.

Consult your general practitioner for advice as to how to help with particular issues such as erectile dysfunction, vaginal pain, muscular pain and loss of libido.

## Sensuality with Fantasy

It is OK to mentally indulge in arousing fantasy. Engaging the mind during sexual activity can be every bit as arousing as physical stimulation. Become the world's best expert in fantasy, train for it and keep your mind consumed with erotic thoughts rather than symptoms.

Lubricants and toys of various types are available on the market to help you enjoy and live your life to the fullest!

## Sexual Positions

Find a position that is comfortable for both partners, experiment with different positions, preferably before both partners are too aroused to want to change to a more comfortable position.

Experiment with pillow placement, sitting on chair or lying on side. Warm up exercise and fitness are excellent ways to increase comfort and endurance. Remember stopping to rest or change position is OK!

Special Considerations – if you feel up to it, it is OK to have sex safely. Be creative and willing to experiment.

Talking about and enjoying an intimate life is not wrapped in the taboo of the past. Having a life with intimacy is possible. Most of all have fun!

Get in touch and Stay in touch with your mojo.

Dance Laugh Sing, Discover once again the joy of touch and an intimate life.

find joy in simple things.

**Excerpt from ARRC self-management program booklet**

