

Optimizing Orgasm & Managing Painful Orgasm

All humans are capable of experiencing orgasm. Orgasm is defined as the pleasurable, neurosensory experience associated with the climax of sexual activity. Orgasm and ejaculation can occur at the same time, but are two different processes that happen in the body. Men who have prostate cancer treatment and can no longer ejaculate can still experience orgasm, even if there is no erection!

The orgasm is generally regarded as the height of sexual excitement. It is a powerful feeling of physical pleasure and sensation, which includes a discharge of accumulated erotic tension.

Orgasms can be part of the sexual response cycle, but do not need to be experienced in order for an individual to experience sexual pleasure.

After prostate cancer treatment, there can often be changes to orgasms. In our experience, typically 40% of men will say their orgasm is pretty much the same, 40% will say the orgasm is different but still pleasurable and the final 20% will say their orgasm is better than before! Some men learn the secrets of women and can experience multiple orgasms. This might be related to taking the time to explore how the body and mind can respond sexually and being open minded to trying new sexual activities, especially if previous sexual activities can no longer be practiced.

Painful Orgasms

Some men might experience painful orgasms after prostate cancer treatment, especially after a prostatectomy. There are many factors that can contribute to orgasmic pain, including structural changes in the pelvis, alterations to nerve function and blood supply and inflammation to surrounding tissues caused by surgery or radiation. In most cases, pain with orgasms will slowly decrease over time while the majority of men will not have any pain with orgasm.

What Can You Do to Manage Orgasmic Pain?

- Give yourself a chance to heal. Trying to have an orgasm too soon after surgery might aggravate the surgical site, leading to pain. Unless otherwise instructed by your doctor, wait at least 6 to 8 weeks to allow your body to heal before being sexual.
- Be orgasmic. Having blood flow in the pelvis can help to recondition the tissue and slowly minimize the orgasmic pain. Just like resuming exercise after taking some time off, your body will have some normal aches and pains until it gets back into shape. It is suggested that you try and be orgasmic at least once a week and then slowly move up to twice a week.
- It may be helpful to keep a journal to document any changes in the pain experienced.
- Pelvic floor physiotherapy can be helpful for reducing orgasmic pain or discomfort.
- Certain medications, such as Tamsulosin, can help with orgasmic pain. You can talk with your specialist or family doctor about this.
- Usually the orgasmic pain following prostate cancer treatment will resolve in two to six months. If the pain continues, there may be a need for an assessment by your doctor to rule out other causes of the orgasmic pain.

What Can You Do to Improve Your Orgasm?

- Do Kegel (pelvic floor) exercises: This will help with strengthening the pelvic floor and blood flow, both of which are important for orgasms.
- Stay present: If you find your mind wandering, try to stay focused on a thought or try bringing your attention back to a thought that is sexually appealing to you. This can also include paying attention to how your body is responding or how your partner is responding.
- Focus on your breathing: Focus on the depth and frequency of breath. Experiment with increasing the depth of your breathing (deep slow breaths in your diaphragm instead of taking shallow inhaled and exhaled breaths through your chest) and avoid holding your breath. Alternately try rapid quick breathing which can bring about orgasm sooner, whereas slow deep breath can actually prolong the orgasm.
- Use a good sexual lubricant: Pulling or friction can sometimes be pleasurable but continuous stimulation can be irritating. It can cause pain, which can be distracting and make you lose focus on the sexual experience.
- Introducing different types of stimulation: One example includes vibrators; these may help to stimulate the nerves responsible for orgasm and also may stimulate the cavernous nerves responsible for erections.
- Adjust the sexual stimulation: By starting and stopping the stimulation, it allows for the build-up of sexual tension before allowing the orgasmic release.
- Change the style of lovemaking: Introduce more psychologically (versus genitally) based arousal techniques, such as Tantric Sex or Erotic Massage.
- Practice being sexual at different times of the day: For example, you may have increased energy earlier in the day as opposed to waiting until the evening.

