

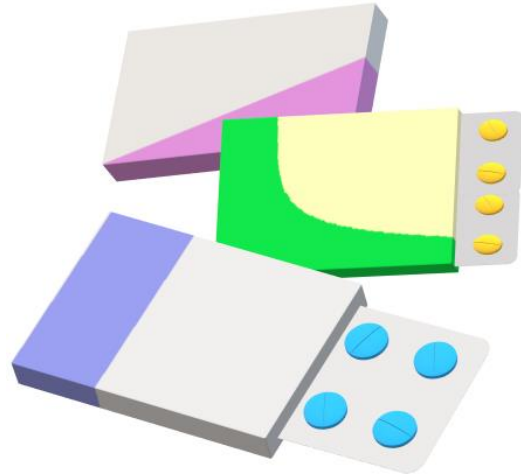
Pills to Help Create Erections

This handout provides information for the use of medications to help individuals form and maintain erections. They can also be used to keep the penile tissue healthy, called penile rehabilitation.

The pills used to help create erections include medications such as Viagra, Cialis, Staxyn, and Levitra.

How do the pills work?

The pills are called PDE5 inhibitors. PDE5 is the enzyme phosphodiesterase-5. When PDE5 is inhibited (stopped from working), more blood will flow into your penis. The muscles in your penis that help form an erection will also work better with the PDE5 inhibitors.



On-Demand

- On-demand doses of the pills can be used when wanting to be sexual.
- Cialis will stay in the body for up to 36 hours. It is a long-acting pill. This means that with sexual stimulation, you will be able to form an erection for up to 36 hours.
- Viagra, Levitra, and Staxyn will stay in the body up to 8 hours. They are short-acting pills. This means that with sexual stimulation, you will be able to form an erection for up to 8 hours.

Daily

- You can take a low dose of Cialis (5 mg) or Viagra (25 mg) each day. This can help you to exercise your penis (penile rehabilitation).
- Use of low dose may be strong enough to be used for sexual activity.
- A daily low dose is not recommended for everyone. Talk to your sexual health clinician to see if this is a good option for you.

What are the possible side effects?

- Headache
- Dizziness
- Stuffy nose
- Flushed (red and warm) face
- Upset stomach
- Vision and hearing changes
- Muscle or joint pain
- Back pain

Who cannot take these pills?

You should not take these pills if you use medications, such as nitroglycerin, to control angina (chest pain). This is because your blood pressure may drop to life-threatening levels. If you have heart disease or are taking medication to control your blood pressure, you need to check with your doctor before taking these pills.

How to use the pills when being sexual?

Viagra, Staxyn, or Levitra:

- You can take Viagra 50-100 mg, Staxyn 10-20 mg, or Levitra 10-20 mg when wanting to be sexual.
- Take at least 1 hour before sexual activity (on-demand).
- Do not eat food 1.5 hours before or after taking Viagra, Staxyn, or Levitra.
- Do not drink alcohol when you take Viagra, Staxyn, or Levitra.

Cialis:

- You can take Cialis 10-20 mg when wanting to be sexual.
- Take 2 hours before sexual activity (on-demand).
- You can take Cialis with or without food.

If you are taking an on-demand dose of the pills, you may need to hold your daily low dose. Talk to your sexual health clinician for more information.

Here are some important things to remember:

- The pills can help bring blood (oxygen) into the penis and to help relax the muscle in the penis. This helps to keep the penis healthy.
- The pills each work in a similar way; however, we suggest trying each of the pills at different times as one pill might work better for you.
- It is important to understand how surgery and radiation affects your erections. Your body may respond better to the pills during different stages of your recovery.
- PDE5 inhibitors work best if you have sexual thoughts and stimulation when taking them.
- The pills need Testosterone (a hormone) to work best. If you have no Testosterone or low Testosterone, the pills may not work the best. Ask your doctor for a blood test to check your Testosterone level.
- Ask for samples of PDE5 inhibitors to try.

For more information:

Using PDE5 Inhibitor Pills for Erectile Dysfunction Video

Go to <https://pcscprogram.ca/pcsc-program/resources/> - Sexual Health Resources - Prostate Cancer and Sexuality Series – 2. Using PDE5 Inhibitor Pills for Erectile Dysfunction

Or click on: <https://youtu.be/ymF8oWFjQow>

