

# **GREAT Sex for Life**

By Dr. Al Sears, MD



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## *Have Great Sex for Life*

### **Trouble in the Bedroom?**

Erectile dysfunction (ED) doesn't have to destroy your relationships.

I'll show you why erectile dysfunction isn't always the nightmare it appears to be. You'll discover the importance of diet, supplementation, and how your overall health affects your sex life.

This report will give you some new options and a fresh perspective on an issue you may have felt uncomfortable about before. Food, exercise, nutrient supplements and herbs can all have huge impacts.

### **The Common Problem No One Wants to Talk About**

The great Russian playwright Anton Chekov said that man can survive the horrors of illness and war, and all the tortures of the soul. But the most tormenting tragedy of all time is the tragedy of the bedroom.

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I know a lot of men who would agree with that. And talking about it, especially to doctors, isn't the easiest thing to do. In fact, ED is the most under-reported condition in the world. Only a small number of men, about 10 percent, talk to a health professional about it.<sup>1</sup>

Here are a few quick facts about ED<sup>2</sup>:

- ED affects more than 30 million men in the United States.
- More than half of all men over 50 have a problem with ED.
- More than 1/3 of all men have a problem—no matter what their age.
- ED is more common in the U.S. than any other country.
- ED is treatable in a majority of cases.

You may think that ED is only an issue when you can't get an erection at all. Actually, if you lose your erection at any time before you have an orgasm, it may indicate that you have a problem. If you have ED, this will happen at least half the time you try.

In some cases ED is temporary and will go away by itself. Other times, treatment is necessary.

In the past, some doctors may have told you that it's, "all in your mind." Or, "just relax." Today, we know that ED is often a sign that trouble is brewing elsewhere in your body. But don't

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rule out the mental side: Recent studies show a strong link between ED and depression. We'll talk about that later.

First, it's important for you to know some of the more common causes of ED.

## Paging Dr. Killjoy

ED may be a result of health conditions you already have. If you're suffering from heart disease, hypertension, diabetes or depression, ED may be a side effect.

ED can also be a side effect of many prescription medications. There are over 200 prescription medications known to cause problems in the bedroom. These can affect your desire, your stamina, and your performance. Even ordinary drugstore cold medicines can leave you feeling less than a man.

Here are some of the categories to watch for:

- almost all antidepressants
- many blood pressure drugs
- some indigestion drugs
- most sedatives

Before you worry about ED, have a look and see if you're taking any of these medications:

<b>Common Medications That May Cause ED</b>	
<b>Blood Pressure</b>	Norvasc
	Vasotec
	Lopressor
<b>Antidepressant</b>	Zoloft
	Prozac
	Buspar
<b>Antihistamine</b>	Dramamine
	Benadryl
<b>Muscle Relaxant</b>	Zantac
<b>Digestion</b>	Norflex

## **Lowering Your Cholesterol May Weaken Your Sex Drive**

The worst offenders when it comes to prescription drugs' effects on erectile function are cholesterol-lowering statin drugs. The big drug companies have spent billions of dollars trying to convince you that statin drugs (cholesterol lowering medications) are the answer to all your problems.

Far from it.

Aside from the other, sometimes lethal side-effects of these dangerous drugs, add one more: clinical proof that statin drugs can cause erectile dysfunction.

That's right. We've known for years that statins have this potential.

As far back as 1996, the Australian Adverse Drug Reaction Advisory Committee, (ADRAC) has been reporting cases of ED caused by statins. Most notably by the statin drug Zocor.<sup>3</sup>

Dozens of men took part in one of their studies. Fortunately, when they stopped taking Zocor, most were able to recover. When given Zocor again, however, their ED came back in full force.

In England, the UK Committee on Safety of Medicines, reported a further 170 cases. As in Australia, the men taking Zocor had more problems than all the other statins combined.<sup>4</sup>

If you think about it, the reason is clear. Statins prevent your body from making cholesterol. Cholesterol is essential for the manufacture of testosterone. In fact, all of your hormones depend on cholesterol.

When your body has a hard time making cholesterol, it has a hard time making testosterone. Low testosterone means a weak performance in the bedroom.

## The Canary in a Coal Mine

Believe it or not, there may actually be times when ED is actually a blessing in disguise. A large number of clinical studies show that it's often an early indicator of cardiovascular disease.

One major study found that 64 percent of men who had a heart attack had ED before the event. Almost the same percentage had ED before going to the hospital for bypass surgery.<sup>5</sup>

“Erectile dysfunction is often a result of hidden heart problems. It even precedes angina. It can be an early warning system in that respect,” said Dr. Andrew McCullough from the New York University School of Medicine.

The connection between ED and heart disease is pretty straightforward: When plaque builds up in your arteries, blood flow decreases. But sexual excitement causes a demand for greater blood flow. Under normal conditions, the inner lining of your blood vessels release nitric oxide, causing the blood vessels to expand. This expansion enables more blood flow, which helps you get an erection.

When your blood vessels harden, as in the case of heart disease, no expansion can take place. And as a result, getting and maintaining an erection becomes difficult.

In many cases, ED is telling you that blood vessels elsewhere in your body aren't expanding as they should. In other words, you're at risk for a heart attack.

## The Missing Puzzle Piece: Depression

Obviously, there are a lot of possible physical explanations for ED, so it's not “all in your head”

after all. But you can't completely discount the mental aspect: Depression does play a part in erectile dysfunction.

The follow-up to one of the largest studies on male health, The Massachusetts Male Aging Study, uncovered an alarming statistic: ED is 82 percent more likely in men who are depressed.<sup>6</sup>

But treating depression alone is unlikely to help with ED. Treating ED, however, and following a heart-healthy lifestyle, will often ease the symptoms of depression.

## Your First Line of Defense

Think back to the times of our ancient ancestors. Do you think cavemen ever had a hard time getting it up? Probably not. Heart disease was unheard of. And with no processed foods, their testosterone levels stayed high. And they had the advantage of eating a high protein, low-carb diet. Protein is essential for the production of sex hormones.

To get the maximum amount of protein, focus on the "big five:" meat, wild fish, eggs, dairy, and nuts.

**Red meat:** I consider beef to be among the most nutritious foods. The protein is complete and it's a good source of creatine. Creatine makes you stronger and more energetic. Red meat is also the best source of the nutrient CoQ10, which is essential for heart health. And knowing



that there's a strong connection between ED and heart disease, it makes sense that CoQ10 also plays an important role in sexual health. I recommend eating grass-fed beef. It has 20 times more of the important omega-3 fatty acids than commercial beef and none of the hormones.

**Wild fish:** You've probably heard that fish can be a source of mercury and other toxins. However, you can minimize these risks and enjoy the benefit of this rich source of omega-3s by choosing wild Alaskan salmon, mackerel, trout, or sardines. Chose wild over farm-raised and small over large fish. The highest levels of mercury are in swordfish, shark and king mackerel and tuna.

**Eggs:** Eggs are the perfect food. I eat them every day. Sure, they contain cholesterol. They don't even raise your blood cholesterol. Sure, eggs contain cholesterol. The developing embryo needs it to produced sex hormones—and so do you. But just because they contain it, doesn't mean they'll raise your cholesterol levels. The bottom line: Eggs do not cause heart disease. In fact, there was never any evidence they did.

Egg yolks have all required fat soluble vitamins (A, D, E, and K), iron, and heart healthy omega-3 fat. The whites have all the water-soluble B vitamins and are the source of the highest quality protein on the face of the planet.

**Dairy:** Dairy is "liquid meat," and full of good protein. Cheese and whole milk are a great source of calcium and vitamin D. Raw, organic milk is best.

**Nuts:** Nuts are rich in healthy monounsaturated fat. Walnuts and almonds among the most nutritious with omega-3 fatty acids, vitamin E, fiber, potassium, and other minerals. Other good choices are pecans, macadamias, cashews, and brazil nuts. Enjoy them as a snack instead of chips or crackers.

Other factors like excessive drinking and smoking also have a profound effect on both your performance and stamina.

A few drinks will put you in the mood, but too many will make you useless. And smoking? Let's put it this way: the Marlboro Man doesn't see much action these days. A solid erection requires blood vessels that are flexible and able to expand. Smoking will tighten your blood vessels making them too narrow to channel the amount of blood you need for an erection.

## Why a Healthy Heart Will Make You a Star in the Bedroom

Following a high protein diet will not only help you in the bedroom, it will keep your heart healthy too. And an explosive new study shows that a healthy heart may be your ticket to a long and satisfying sex life.

Scientists at the University of South Carolina discovered a link between HDL (good) cholesterol and ED. As I've been saying all along, your HDL level is the most important factor in

determining your risk for heart disease. Now, that advice is proving to be just as important in the bedroom.

The doctors in South Carolina found that men with an HDL level of 60 mg/dl drastically reduced their chance of having ED. Men with an HDL level of 30 mg/dl, were 66 percent more likely to develop a problem with ED.<sup>7</sup>

## L-Arginine: Nature's Hydraulic Pump

Not only does L-arginine improve cholesterol levels, relieve heart-related chest pains (angina), and control blood pressure, it can also help you get an erection.

An erection depends on the expansion of blood vessels. The gas molecule that helps cause this expansion is nitric oxide. Released by the inner lining of your blood vessels, nitric oxide helps to relax smooth muscle tissue and expand the blood vessels in your penis. L-arginine helps create nitric oxide.

Current studies support the use of L-arginine to ensure that the level of nitric oxide is high enough to keep blood flowing to the penis. One study showed an 80 percent improvement in erectile function for men who took 2.8 grams of L-arginine for two weeks.<sup>8</sup>

Another study, which specifically focused on men with ED, showed that more than 1/3 of the

men who took 5 grams of L-arginine for five weeks reported a significant improvement.<sup>9</sup>

If you're interested in supplementing with L-arginine, I suggest starting with a loading dose of 5 grams daily for two weeks. Then take 2.5 grams daily for maintenance. Never exceed 10 grams a day.

For best results, combine with a healthy dose (25 mcg) of vitamin B12, and a few of the following herbs. I've had great success with them over the years.

## Libido-Pumping Herbs

**Tribulus Terrestris:** This is my favorite herb for men's health. It's been used in Europe for centuries to boost sex hormone levels and has been clinically proven to restore and improve libido in men. Recommendation: 250 mg of Tribulus Terrestris daily.

**Muira Puama:** Recent scientific studies confirm the powerful aphrodisiac qualities of this herb. In 1990, men suffering from ED or loss of libido took Muira Puama extract. 62 percent of those with loss of libido reported improvement. More than 50 percent of those with ED reported improvement.<sup>10</sup> Recommendation: 100 mg of Muira Puama extract daily.

**Yohimbe:** This herb is from the inner bark of a tree, which grows in Africa. At one time, the drug made from yohimbe, *yohimbine* was the

only medication approved by the FDA for the treatment of ED. Recommendation: 250 mg of Yohimbine extract daily.

**Korean Red Ginseng:** This supplement is widely taken to help your body deal with stress. Ginseng also increases stamina and energy. It can even improve your testosterone levels. When you consider it also has a positive effect on blood flow, it's easy to see why ginseng would be valuable to maintain an erection. Recommendation: 250 mg of Korean Red Ginseng daily.

A word of caution: I don't recommend taking herbal supplements continuously over a long period. Use them for four to six weeks and then take a break.

## Take Charge of Your Sex Life

Erectile dysfunction is a complex issue, but that doesn't mean you have to sit back and do nothing. In many cases, you can get rid of the problem with a natural solution. Discovering your power as a man is some times as simple as removing what got in the way and restoring a natural balance.

By avoiding certain prescription drugs, pumping up on protein, and following a heart healthy lifestyle, you'll be back in the saddle and enjoying a healthy sex life. If that's not enough, try supplementing with the nutrients and herbs

I mentioned. If you still need more help, there is one additional strategy to try.

## That Little Blue Pill

Unlike most prescription medications, Viagra does what it says without significant side effects. I've prescribed it to my patients with great results, although I always put the emphasis on testosterone levels. With that in mind, Viagra can be a good performance enhancer.

In spite of its popularity and obvious benefits, Viagra may not be as helpful for long-term treatment of ED.

There have been studies done to find out how men react to Viagra over one to three years. In one survey, more than half the men stopped taking Viagra after three years because it stopped working.<sup>11</sup>

The same study shows that more than 30 percent of the men had to double their dose to achieve the same effect.

The only warning I offer you is this: Prolonged use of drugs like Viagra can mask symptoms of cardiovascular disease.

Don't use Viagra as a crutch. Get to the root of the problem and try some of the alternatives I mention above. They're much more likely to solve your ED problem for good, and help your overall health at the same time.

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> Wylie KR. Management of male sexual problems. Update February 6, 2003.

<sup>2</sup> Gaines KK. Recently approved drugs for erectile dysfunction. *Urol Nurs* 24(1):46-48, 2004.

<sup>3</sup> Boyd IW. HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors-induced impotence (letter). *Ann Pharmacother* 1996; 30(10): 1,199

<sup>4</sup> "Reports to the Committee on Safety of Medicines (Yellow Card Scheme) of cases of erectile dysfunction thought to be caused by lipid-lowering drugs." Cited in Rivzi K, et al. "Do lipid lowering drugs cause erectile dysfunction?" *Family Practice* 2002; 19(1): 95-98

<sup>5</sup> Feldman HA, Goldstein I, et al. "Impotence and its medical correlates: results of the Massachusetts Male Aging Study." *J Urol.* 1994; 151(1): 54-61

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> Wei M, Macera CA, et al. "Total cholesterol and high density lipoprotein cholesterol as important predictors of erectile dysfunction," *Am J Epidemiol* 1994; 140(10): 930-937

<sup>8</sup> Zorgniotti, AW, Lizza EF. "Effect of large doses of the nitric oxide precursor, L-arginine, on erectile dysfunction," *Int J Impot Res* 1994; 6(1): 33-35

<sup>9</sup> Chen J, et al. "Effect of oral administration of high-dose nitric oxide donor L-arginine in men with organic erectile dysfunction: results of a double-blind, randomized, placebo-controlled study," *BJU Int* 1999; 83(3): 269-273

<sup>10</sup> Sears, Al M.D., *The T- Factor*, pp. 38-54, 2000

<sup>11</sup> Rosen RC, Fisher W, et al. "The multinational men's attitudes to life events and sexuality (MALES) study." *Curr Med Res Opin* 2004; 20(5): 607-617

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## About the Author



Al Sears, MD continues to see patients at his integrative clinic and research center in Florida where he has developed novel exercise and nutritional systems transforming the lives of over 20,000 patients.

He has written over 500 articles and 6 books in the fields of alternative medicine, anti-aging and nutritional supplementation. He enjoys a worldwide readership of millions spread over 123 countries, has appeared on over 50 national radio programs, ABC News, CNN and ESPN.

His third book, *The Doctor's Heart Cure*, exposed the real causes of the modern epidemic of heart disease with practical how-to advice for building real heart strength and resistance to disease without drugs. It is available in 9 languages and remains a best-seller 3 years after its publication.

In 2005, Dr. Sears' *12 Secrets to Virility* shed light on the huge environmental and nutritional problems with virility in our modern world, gave men a step-by step guide for maintaining health, strength and masculinity as they age, and became a bestseller during its first month of release.

He publishes a monthly newsletter – *Health Confidential* – addressing the issues of aging, nutrition and sexual health for men and women, a weekly e-letter called *Doctor's House Call* and is the health columnist to a circulation of hundreds of thousands in the popular self-help letter *Early to Rise*.

Dr. Sears is board certified as a clinical nutrition specialist and was appointed to the international panel of experts at **Health Sciences Institute**, (HSI) a worldwide information service for alternative nutritional therapies.

A master gardener and herbalist, Dr. Sears maintains an herbal apothecary of over 250 organic herbs used for research, education and treatments. Dr. Sears is the founder and director of The Wellness Research Foundation, conducting original research evaluating natural alternatives to pharmaceutical therapies.

Dr. Sears is a member of the American Academy of Anti-Aging Medicine and is Board Certified in Anti-Aging Medicine. As a pioneer in this new field of medicine, he is an avid researcher and sought after lecturer to thousands of doctors and health enthusiasts.

He is a member of the American College of Sports Medicine and the National Youth Sports Coaches Association. As well as being a sports and fitness coach and a lifelong advocate of exercise programs, Dr. Sears is an ACE certified fitness trainer.

For more information about Dr. Sears, please visit: <http://www.alsearsmd.com>