

Talking to your doctor about Erectile Dysfunction

Helpful tips for starting the conversation

It can sometimes feel that seeing a doctor to discuss erectile dysfunction (ED), or any sexual health condition can be embarrassing. However, sexual health issues such as ED in men are incredibly common, and it's important to remember that your doctor is a professional and that they will have seen many patients with ED before.

If you experience ED only a few times, the issue may resolve on its own and could be due to stress or drinking too much alcohol.¹ However, if the problem is persistent, it may be time to speak with your doctor.

Booking your appointment with your GP

The first thing you can do is to make an appointment with your GP. If you don't want to tell the receptionist why you're coming in, just say you want to talk to the doctor about a male health problem. Many surgeries now offer an online booking system for appointments so you may be able to book through this as an alternative.

Preparing for your appointment

Ahead of your appointment, it may be useful to make a few notes on how long you have been experiencing ED and if you have any other symptoms, including any which seem unrelated, as they may be important for your doctor to know.

Your doctor will ask you about your medical history, so be prepared to tell them about any illnesses or operations you have had in the past and if you have any chronic (long-term) illnesses.

If you have a partner, speak to them about your concerns and they may be able to help you prepare. You can also consider asking your partner to attend the appointment with you.

Talking tips to starting the conversation

Your doctor is a professional, and once they understand what topic you would like to talk about, they will be able to guide the conversation and ask you some questions.

Find the right words for you to broach the topic. There are some examples below which you can practice saying ahead of time to start the conversation.

- *“I think I might have erectile dysfunction.”*
- *“I am having trouble getting erections.”*
- *“I have a men’s health issue I want to talk to you about.”*

Your doctor will then begin to ask you some questions about yourself to help them understand what you are experiencing to diagnose you and to understand why you may be having ED.

What questions will my doctor ask me?

The questions your doctor asks you around your ED are to help them build a complete picture of your health and decide what next steps are best for you.

Questions may include:¹

- *When did your symptoms start? Does this happen every time you have sex or under certain circumstances?*
- *Can you tell me all medications you are taking?*
- *Are you going through a stressful time at the moment?*
- *Can you tell me about your alcohol intake, if you smoke and about any other drug taking?*

Your doctor may ask you further questions regarding your sexual health and will review your medical history to look for other conditions that may be causing the ED.

They may also give you a questionnaire to fill out in private to understand more about your condition. They will then decide what is the likely cause of your ED and carry out some further tests.

Because ED can be associated with more serious health conditions, it is essential to see your doctor and have your ED investigated.¹

Reference

1. Sooriyamoorthy & Leslie. *Erectile dysfunction*. StatPearls. Accessed: October 2022.