

Department of Urology

Information for patients with erectile dysfunction

What is Erectile Dysfunction?

An erection problem is known as Erectile Dysfunction (ED) or impotence. This occurs when the penis doesn't get hard (erect) enough to allow a man to have sexual intercourse. This is a common problem and all men suffer from it at some time, especially when they get older. For some men this becomes a regular problem.

How does a normal erection occur?

As a man becomes aroused by either visual or physical stimulation, or sexual contact, the brain sends impulses down the spinal cord to the nerves within the penis. It is these nerves that allow blood to flow into the penis causing it to enlarge and harden. After ejaculation, the man loses interest in the sexual act and the process reverses until the penis returns to its normal limp state.

Who should I talk to about Erectile Dysfunction?

Your GP will be your first contact point and will be able to discuss the treatment options with you. In many instances the GP will be able to prescribe treatment for you, or you may be referred to the hospital specialists for further advice.

Drug treatment

The NHS has a limited budget for drug therapy which means doctors and health authorities are under pressure to stay within certain financial



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limits. In order to help them do this the Government has decided to use a system for prescribing called 'Schedule 11' for all erectile dysfunction treatments. Schedule 11 is different to the way your GP prescribes treatment, in that only certain groups of patients are allowed to have treatment on the NHS.

Who can receive treatment on the NHS?

Men who have or have had the following:

- Prostate cancer
- Radical pelvic surgery
- Diabetes
- Men who have had their prostate removed
- Men treated for kidney failure (transplant and dialysis)
- Single gene neurological disease
- Severe pelvic injury
- Spinal chord injury
- Poliomyelitis
- Parkinson's disease
- Multiple sclerosis
- Spina bifida

If you were suffering from erectile dysfunction and were receiving treatment for it on the 14th December 1998, you will be able to continue to receive treatment on the NHS.

If you fit into any of the above categories your GP or specialist will mark your prescription "SLS". This stands for 'Selected List Scheme' and when you go to the chemist to pick up your prescription it tells the pharmacist that they are able to dispense your treatment as a normal prescription on the NHS. You would then have to pay the normal prescription charge, unless you are exempt from doing so.

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Further Information

For further information or advice please contact:

Sarah Roth or Kalbinder Perkins

Clinical Nurse Specialists for Urology

024 7696 5296, or bleep 1246 via switchboard 024 7696 4000

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