



## Intimacy and Illness: Aging

Society has generally not accepted the fact that older adults are sexual beings; sexuality in later life has been viewed as taboo in the past. People are sexual well into their later life; some studies have shown that people in their eighties and nineties are still intimate with their partners! Although aging can have a profound effect on sexuality and intimacy, it is important to understand those changes and know what can be done to maintain sexuality and intimacy as you get older.

### How can aging affect my sexuality?

Older adults are still sexual into the later years of their life, but their sexuality is typically affected by aging in some aspect. Aging can affect men and women in many different ways. Some older adults feel the societal pressures to not be sexual and adjust their intimacy according to these views. Many of the sexuality changes experienced in later life are due to health issues more than aging. Cardiovascular problems, chronic pain or arthritis, diabetes, and dementia can all interfere with a person's sexuality and intimacy.

A decline in hormones in both men and women can cause changes in a person's sexuality. There are certain changes that affect only men or women:

#### WOMEN

- Vaginal lubrication decreases
- A decrease in libido or sex drive
- Rapid decrease in arousal after orgasm
- Loss of elasticity in the vaginal tissues
- Changes to the shape, size, and color of the vulva and vagina
- Thinning of the vaginal tissues

#### MEN

- Changes in erection: slower, less full, may not last as long, disappears quickly after orgasm, longer time between erections
- Less sperm volume
- Loss of ability to detect ejaculation

### How can I improve my sexuality during aging?

It might be necessary to re-evaluate your definition of intimacy; being intimate does not necessarily mean being sexual. Holding hands, cuddling, or talking can help you and your partner maintain intimacy even if you are unable or do not want to be sexual. Explore other ways of being sexual and intimate with your partner. Communication with your partner can help each of you maintain your intimacy, as well as learn the other person's thoughts and feelings about sexuality, intimacy, and aging. Discuss any issues that you may be having and work through them together, trying to find ways to overcome the issue in a way that you both can agree upon.

Certain medications enable both men and women to continue to be intimate throughout life. Discuss these medications with your health care provider to determine what is right for you. Using a vaginal lubricant, an arousal cream, or other products can help counter some of the effects of aging. Practicing Kegel exercises is also a great way to maintain your genital health as you age.





## What products does Pure Romance offer to help improve my sexuality?

If you find that you have a decreased libido or have a more difficult time reaching orgasm than before, you may want to try an arousal cream, such as Ex-T-Cee, Nympho Niagra, or X-Scream (which can be used by both men and women). It is also important to use a water-based vaginal lubricant each time you engage in sexual activity, which can help with vaginal dryness. Try Just Like Me or Sweet Seduction, which are both gentle and non-irritating. If you find that a water-based lubricant is not enough to help with vaginal dryness, try a vaginal moisturizer, such as Fresh Start, which is estrogen-free and very gentle.

For men experiencing difficulties with erectile dysfunction, a c-ring, such as JellyTool Belt, can be worn during intercourse and will help men acquire and maintain an erection. (It is highly recommended to use a thick, creamy lubricant, such as Whipped, when using a c-ring.)

You can also get other product recommendations from your Pure Romance Consultant or by visiting our Web site.

