



## Libido: What is your libido?

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The libido is also known as your sexual desire or sex drive. Everyone has a libido, although each person's libido level varies. It is possible for a person's libido, or sexual desire, to be affected or change numerous times over their lifetime.

### What can affect or change my libido?

There are many different reasons why a person's libido can be impacted, including physical and psychological stresses or changes.

#### PHYSICAL

- Menopause - A decline in estrogen levels can affect a woman's libido
- Dyspareunia - Painful sexual intercourse
- Vaginismus - The involuntary contraction/spasm of the vaginal muscles, which makes penetration difficult, if not impossible
- Pregnancy, childbirth, and breastfeeding—Changes in hormone levels can increase or decrease sexual desire
- Infections—Yeast infections, urinary tract infections, or a sexually transmitted infection could affect a person's libido
- Problems with orgasm - Being unable to reach orgasm or to reach it within a reasonable period of time
- Illness - Certain illnesses and their medications can alter a person's libido

#### PSYCHOLOGICAL

- Depression - Lack of motivation, feeling sad, and withdrawing from activities, including sex
- Performance anxiety - A fear of painful sex, or pressure to have sex or reach orgasm can decrease libido
- Fatigue - Being too tired to have sex
- Lack of time - Busy schedules could leave insufficient time for intimacy
- Familiarity - It is not uncommon for a couple's desire for sex to decrease over time
- Relationship problems - Difficulties in a relationship can make a couple's sexual desire suffer
- Stress - Stress hormones can dampen sexual desire and response
- Certain drugs - Antidepressants, oral contraceptive pills, and certain other prescription drugs, as well as illegal drugs and excessive alcohol use, can lower a person's libido
- Exercise - Too much or too little can affect the libido
- Traumatic experience - Sexual harassment, sexual abuse, or rape can have an impact on your libido

