

CHALLENGES AROUND SEXUAL ACTIVITY

The physical requirements of sexual activity often pose challenges to an individual with a limb disability. Challenges include:

- Difficulty with dressing and undressing yourself or your partner.
- Coping with a sling/brace/orthosis/prosthesis.
- Difficulty with obtaining a comfortable, desired position.
- Moving from one position to another during sexual activities.
- Maintaining stability and control of the position.
- Decreased general strength limiting participation in sexual activity.

Reduced ability with the upper limb may challenge muscular strength and stamina with sexual activity usually incorporating the use of both arms/hands. Challenges may occur during interaction with yourself and a partner and include activities such as stroking, caressing, hugging, petting, stimulating or massaging.

Interference of Pain and Compromised Sensation

Pain can inhibit or prevent both physiological and psychological sexual desire and arousal, in turn reducing or preventing participation in sexual activities. If you are experiencing erectile dysfunction or general loss of libido (sexual desire) then discuss this with your GP.

Conclusion

One area for discussion between yourself and your partner might be about body image and ways of reducing feelings of self-consciousness in private and intimate situations. This may help both of you to adjust to any concerns and fears that are voiced.

Patients are looking for reassurance and discussion surrounding practical solutions to sexual health challenges along with fears about social, psychological, and psychosexual challenges.

There are many ways to experience sexual satisfaction with yourself and/or with a partner. Your individual issues can be discussed in confidence with your GP who can advise on how to access individual or couples' counselling.