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Review:

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( On behalf of ACE Executive body )

## **DIABETES AND SEXUAL DISORDERS IN MEN**

### 1. What sort of sexual problems do men with diabetes develop?

The most common sexual problem in men with diabetes is problems with erection. Often their sexual desire (libido) is normal, but sometimes libido can also be affected. Other less common problems are premature ejaculation, delayed or absent ejaculation and reverse ejaculation.

### 2. How common is the sexual problem in men with diabetes?

It is estimated that around 50% of men with diabetes suffer from some sort of sexual problem. Erectile problems are 2 to 3-fold more common in men with diabetes.

### 3. Who is prone to develop sexual problems?

When diabetes control has been poor for a longtime or diabetes remained undiagnosed for a longtime, then they are at risk of developing complications. Some of these complications can cause erectile problem and the important ones which do so are: a) problems with blood flow to the penis and b) nerve damage. Other problems which can contribute to sexual problems are smoking habits, co-existing depression which affects the libido, obesity, lack of adequate physical activity, high blood pressure and certain medications. In some men with diabetes, the penis become curved due to scarring which makes erection and intercourse difficult. People with male hormone deficiency (testosterone) can present with both decreased sexual desire and erection problem.

### 4. Does the type of diabetes have an impact on such problems?

Both type 1 and type 2 diabetes, when poorly controlled, can cause complications as described above and hence men with both type 1 and type 2 diabetes can develop sexual problems.

### 5. How to prevent sexual problems?

Good diabetic control, maintaining blood pressure and cholesterol in normal range, quitting smoking, maintaining normal body weight and good physical activity are all important measures in preventing sexual problems when someone has diabetes.

### 6. How is the problem treated?

In the initial stages, erection problems can be treated with certain medications which increase the blood flow to the penis. When there is no significant response, then other measures to treat include injection of certain medicines directly into the penis and placing mechanical pump devices into the penis through surgical means. When there is male hormone deficiency, replacing the hormone can restore normalcy. Treatment of other contributing factors like depression can help in improving the sexual functions.