

Prostate Cancer Treatment Commonly Causes Sexual Health Changes

Hard to discuss and even harder to experience, expecting and acknowledging sexual changes can alleviate the distress they cause for both partners in a relationship.



It's extremely common and normal for changes in sexual health to happen during and after prostate cancer treatment.

Both partners may experience:

Shame

Disappointment

Fear

These feelings can lead to avoiding sexual activity and can creep into other aspects of relationship intimacy.

Sexual changes can include:

Erectile dysfunction (ED)

- Very common
- Occurs shortly after surgery and during hormone therapy
- Can resolve on its own within a year or two
- Peaks the 3rd year after radiation treatment



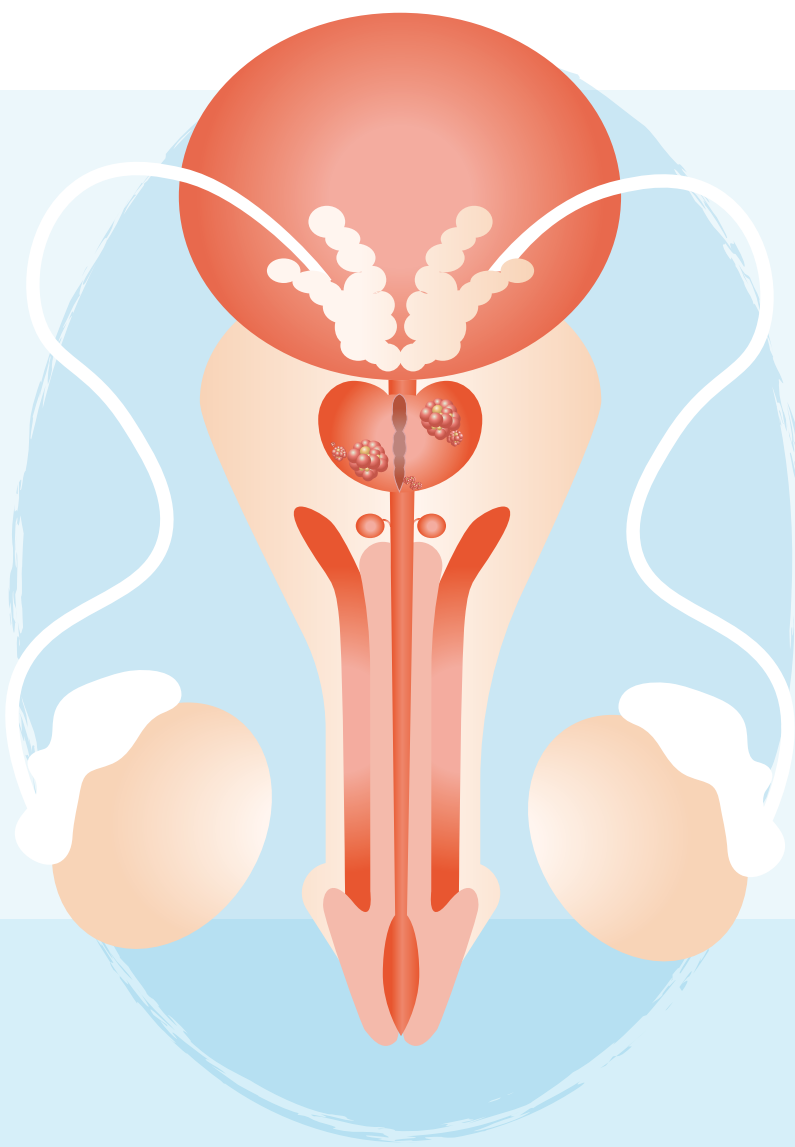
Low sex drive (libido)

- Very common during hormone therapy
- Can last after treatment



Inability to ejaculate

- Common after radiation and some medications
- More common in men ages 65+
- Can resolve on its own after radiation
- Happens to everyone after prostate removal because the prostate creates fluid for semen
- If fertility is an issue, discuss banking sperm before treatment



Pain before, during or after orgasm (dysorgasmia)



- Rare
- Usually stops a few months after treatment



Sexual incontinence (urine leakage) during orgasm or foreplay

- Common, with half of men reporting one or both at least once after treatment
- Typically temporary
- Emptying the bladder before sex can help prevent leakage

Rediscovery of sexual intimacy requires patience, creativity and practice

Intimacy is not just erectile performance and penetration. It can include:



Kissing



Massage



Oral sex



Mutual stimulation



Erotic play



Vibrators

Need support?

A sex therapist can help partners find ways to create intimacy both in and out of the bedroom.

