

ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS

ED: Erectile dysfunction refers to the inability to maintain an erection that is sufficient for sexual activity.

mCRP: Metastatic castration-resistant prostate cancer refers to advanced prostate cancer that continues to grow even after the testosterone levels are at low levels.

ADT: Androgen deprivation therapy refers to hormone therapy aimed at decreasing the amount of androgen present in the body.

Intimacy: Intimacy refers to the emotional, mental, spiritual, or physical closeness between two people. Intimacy does not only involve sexual contact.

Dry orgasm: Dry orgasm can be a side effect of treatment for prostate cancer. It refers to ejaculating little to no semen during orgasm.

I have been diagnosed with prostate cancer. Does this mean I will never be able to engage in sexual activity again?

- a. No, being diagnosed with prostate cancer will not prevent you from engaging in sexual activity or being intimate. Hormone therapy treatment for prostate cancer can cause erectile dysfunction (ED) and decrease in your libido (sexual desire). However, there are treatments that will help decrease the effects of ED.

Now that my husband has been receiving hormone treatment for his prostate cancer, he is tired, seems to be angry almost every day, and does not want to have sex with me anymore. When we do have sex, he cannot keep an erection, and I am worried that he is no longer interested in me. He does not want to talk about it. Do you know what could be causing this?

- a. Thank you for sharing your concerns and the changes you have noticed. The treatment your husband is receiving can cause the changes you have mentioned. Would you like me to have your husband's urologist speak with you about these concerns? Would you like to share further concerns with one of our mental health counselors?

I started hormone therapy for my prostate cancer and now my breasts seem to be growing; I no longer have the same desire for sexual activity, and when I do engage in sexual activity, I have difficulty maintaining an erection. Will these side effects last forever? I am worried my wife will leave me.

- a. I appreciate you being open to discussing your side effects and concerns related to your sexual health. The symptoms you are experiencing are some of the side effects of the hormone treatment. Your treatment is what we refer to as ADT, or androgen deprivation therapy, which reduces your testosterone level and can cause lack of sexual desire, hot flashes, weight gain, fatigue, and mood swings. We have treatments for the side effects that you have described. I can share your concerns with your cancer team so you can discuss further treatments.

My doctor told me that I may not ejaculate semen when I have an orgasm. Does this mean I no longer need to use condoms when having sex?

- a. Even though you may have what we refer to as a dry orgasm, we recommend continuing to use barrier protection, such as a condom, during sexual activity. The barrier protection will help protect you and your partner from sexually transmitted diseases.



PREPARING for the **CONVERSATION** (Nursing Team)

Hormone therapy treatment for prostate cancer have various side effects that impact daily life. Some of these side effects include an increase in breast tissue, erectile dysfunction, weight gain, fatigue, hot flashes, and mood swings. These side effects impact sexual health and some patients do not feel comfortable sharing their concerns with the healthcare team.

A few tips to help facilitate these discussions include:

- Encourage the patient and caregivers to make notes about what they understand about treatment options, their side effects, and how treatment will impact their life.**
- Ask the patient if they have concerns regarding the treatment and how it has impacted their quality of life.**
- Reassure the patient that the side effects they are experiencing are normal and experienced by others.**
- Explain the importance of discussing at each visit what side effects they are experiencing. Create a safe environment for them to ask about sexual side effects or complain about them and ask for help.**
- Sit down and make time for the discussions so that the patient does not feel rushed.**
- Have resources readily available.**

PREPARING for CONVERSATIONS WITH YOUR CARE PROVIDER



Hormone therapy treatment for prostate cancer has side effects that can change your daily life and your quality of life. You might have side effects like larger breasts, erectile dysfunction, weight gain, fatigue, hot flashes, and mood swings. These side effects can affect your sexual health and self-confidence. They can be hard to talk about with your healthcare team. Some tips to help with those discussions include:

Remember that the side effects that you have are common and other people with prostate cancer and on the same treatment have these side effects, too.

Your team is here to help you learn about your treatment options, manage your side effects, and provide helpful resources for you and your partner.

It can be difficult to remember everything you want to ask your healthcare team. Write down questions that come to mind between visits, then bring the list with you when you see your team again.

RESOURCES

- Urology Care Foundation: <https://www.urologyhealth.org/educational-resources/erectile-dysfunction>
- Prostate Cancer Foundation: <https://www.pcf.org/patient-resources/>
- Cancer Care: https://www.cancercare.org/diagnosis/prostate_cancer
- National Cancer Institute: <https://www.cancer.gov/types/prostate>
- Us Too: <https://www.ustoo.org/Access-Additional-Resources>
- Cancer.net: <https://www.cancer.net/cancer-types/prostate-cancer/additional-resources>