

Points to Remember

- Erectile dysfunction (ED) is when you cannot get or keep an erection firm enough to have sex. You may have ED if you
 - can get an erection sometimes, though not every time
 - can get an erection, yet it does not last long enough for sex
 - are unable to get an erection at all
- An erection occurs when blood flow into the penis increases, making the penis larger and firmer. Hormones, blood vessels, nerves, and muscles all work together to cause an erection.
- ED often has more than one cause. Many diseases can damage nerves, arteries, and muscles.
- To find the cause of your ED, your doctor may
 - take your medical and sexual history
 - ask you questions about your mental health
 - give you a physical exam
 - test your blood

- give you a nighttime erection test
- perform an injection test
- perform a Doppler penile ultrasound
- Your doctor can offer you a number of treatments for ED. For many men, the answer is as simple as taking a pill. Other men have to try two or three options before they find a treatment that works for them.
- You can prevent many of the causes of ED by making healthy lifestyle choices. Following a healthy diet may help prevent ED. Quitting smoking and getting physical activity are also important ways to prevent ED.