



FACT SHEET

Brain Injury & Sexuality

*Do
you
have
trouble
with
sexuality
since
your
brain
injury?*

What does this mean?

The following changes in sexual functioning can happen after a brain injury:

- ◆ **Decreased Desire:** Many people may have less desire or interest in sex.
- ◆ **Increased Desire:** After brain injury, people may want to have sex more often than usual. Others may have difficulty controlling their sexual behavior. They may make inappropriate sexual advances or sexual comments.
- ◆ **Decreased Arousal:** Many people have difficulty becoming sexually aroused. This means that they may be interested in sex, but their bodies do not respond.
- ◆ **Difficulty or Inability to Reach Orgasm/Climax:** Both men and women may have difficulty reaching orgasm or climax.
- ◆ **Reproductive Changes:** Women may experience irregular menstrual cycles or periods. They may also have trouble getting pregnant. Men may have decreased sperm production and may have difficulty getting a woman pregnant.

How might a brain injury affect sexuality?

- ◆ Damage to the areas of the brain that regulate sexual desire/arousal.
- ◆ Hormonal changes.
- ◆ Medication side effects.
- ◆ Fatigue/Tiredness.
- ◆ Problems with movement.
- ◆ Loss of self-esteem or change in self-image.
- ◆ Changes in thinking abilities.
- ◆ Emotional difficulties.
- ◆ Changes in relationships and social activities.

Recommended strategies:

- ◆ Talk with your doctor.
- ◆ Get a comprehensive medical exam.
- ◆ Consider psychotherapy or counseling, couples therapy, and/or sex therapy.
- ◆ Plan sexual activities during the time of day when you are less tired.
- ◆ When having sex, position yourself so that you can move without being in pain or becoming off balance.
- ◆ Arrange things so that you will be less distracted during sex.
- ◆ There are sexual aids developed to help people with disability. A good website for these is: www.Mypleasure.com/education/disability/index.asp.
- ◆ Most importantly, practice safe sex:
 - After a TBI, it is just as important for you to protect yourself from unplanned pregnancy and from sexually transmitted disease as it was before your injury. Even if a woman's period has not returned, she can still get pregnant.