

Premature Ejaculation

What is it?

The term “premature” implies that something happens too soon. Premature ejaculation is defined as a male sexual climax/orgasm that happens before a man wants it to happen or too quickly during intercourse to satisfy his partner.

Most couples enjoy the sensations of intercourse, but it usually ends when the man ‘comes’ or ejaculates. Therefore, if a man ejaculates quite quickly, either he or his partner may be disappointed that the intercourse did not last longer. This is the most frequently encountered sexual complaint of men and couples. It is estimated to occur in 30% of all men. (<http://chealth.canoe.ca/>)

What causes premature ejaculation?

In many cases premature ejaculation is a matter of perception, or how we think about sex, rather than the result of a physical or medical problem. We all learn the idea that sex equals intercourse. Nobody actually sits us down and teaches us this but the culture we live in – movies, books, jokes, etc. – reinforces the message that if a person hasn’t had intercourse, they haven’t really had sex. (Remember Bill Clinton?)

There are two physical realities that we need to think about when discussing premature ejaculation:

- ❖ The first reality is that a man’s normal physical response is to experience climax and, therefore, ejaculate 2 - 3 minutes after penetrating the vagina. The media may glorify or exaggerate the amount of time the “average” bout of intercourse lasts. Movies or books may make it sound like men can last for hours when, in reality, most men can only last for a few minutes once intercourse begins.
- ❖ The second reality is that a woman’s normal physical response is to build to a climax (orgasm/come) about 12 – 14 minutes after intercourse begins. As well, most women don’t orgasm from intercourse alone, especially if intercourse involves only penetration of the vagina by the penis. A woman may need other stimulation (kissing/touching body including the clitoris) in order to have an orgasm. In fact, some women can more easily climax from clitoral stimulation during masturbation than from intercourse.

The truth is that what many people consider premature ejaculation is simply a normal part of the male sexual response. It is most common in adolescents, young adults, and

men who don't have a lot of sexual knowledge about normal male and female sexual response and/or a lack of sexual experience.

There are many reasons why a man may ejaculate before he is ready to or wanting to. As is the case with erectile dysfunction, the underlying causes for premature ejaculation can be both psychological and physical. Some of them include:

- Age. Teenage men or younger adults may find that they ejaculate quite quickly. Usually, as a man ages, he is able to prolong his erections and predict when he will ejaculate. Remember, although a younger man may ejaculate quite quickly, he will usually be able to have another erection in a relatively short time. If he is able to talk to his partner about this, they can plan to have one quick sexual release followed by a longer session of sex play that allows them both to experience orgasm.
- Excitement level. If a man has not masturbated or had intercourse for a while he may be so excited that he ejaculates quickly. The "problem" may go away if he masturbates more often or when he gets used to having a regular sexual partner.
- Condom use. Usually condoms reduce the sensitivity of a man's penis and his erection lasts longer when he wears one. If he starts having intercourse without a condom, he may find that he reaches orgasm more quickly. Sometimes this changes once he gets used to intercourse without a condom.
- A new sexual partner or situation. New experiences can trigger anxiety related premature ejaculation. This can occur in conjunction with erectile dysfunction or as a side effect of it.
- Medical reasons. For a small percentage of men, premature ejaculation may be the sign of a medical problem that can be treated with medication.
- Drug use. Some recreational and medically prescribed drugs cause a man to ejaculate more quickly than usual.
- Emotional concerns. Unresolved emotional concerns or relationship problems can affect a man's sexual response. Feelings such as fear, guilt or anxiety can result in both erectile dysfunction and/or premature ejaculation.
- A man's nature. Some men can sustain erections for a long time, some cannot. Ejaculating quickly may be something a man cannot control – just like body shape or eye colour etc.

Can premature ejaculation be treated?

Remember, when most of us think about the word "sex" we think about penetration and intercourse. Sometimes the stress of trying to "last longer" causes a man to feel inadequate, selfish and guilty. This will only make the situation worse.

Intercourse is usually an enjoyable part of lovemaking and it is understandable why a couple might want it to last longer. However, it is important for them to explore other

options for sexual stimulation. There are many ways for a couple to enjoy physical contact. Some options are: oral sex, using fingers or sex toys to stimulate a partner or oneself, mutual masturbation, watching or reading erotic materials together, talking “dirty” ... the list is endless.

Having said that, a man may want to deal with what he considers premature ejaculation by learning to control and predict his ejaculations. Here are some ways to do this:

- Stop-Start Method. This is the most commonly “prescribed” method of learning to control ejaculation. It can be done during intercourse with a partner, oral sex, or while masturbating alone or with the help of a partner. The man should bring himself (or his partner should help him) almost to the point of ejaculation, but then stop for about 30 seconds. He should take a breath or withdraw and then start again. This pattern is repeated until he wants to let the ejaculation happen. If a man practices this often, especially by masturbating, he should be able to learn to delay ejaculation.
- The “Squeeze” Method. This is much the same as the Stop-Start Method except that when the man is almost at the point of ejaculation, either he or his partner gently squeezes the end of the penis (where the glans meets the shaft) for several seconds. There should be no more movement for about 30 seconds and then continue, repeating until he wants ejaculation to happen.
- Control the PC muscles. Many women know about Kegel exercises to control the PC muscles – the muscles used to start and stop urinating. Men have these muscles, as well. When a man ejaculates, these muscles need to be relaxed. By strengthening and learning to control the PC muscles, a man can have more control over his ejaculation. To strengthen these muscles, he should squeeze them as if he’s trying to stop himself from peeing. Hold the muscles tight for a few seconds. Relax. Repeat. (Do not do this until the point of exhaustion or it becomes painful.) After practicing awhile, a few times a day, the muscles will become stronger.
- Change sex positions. It is often more difficult for a man to control his ejaculations when he is on top of his partner (missionary position). Try new positions (spooning, woman on top) to slow things down and help prolong intercourse. Allowing the woman to control the speed can also help the man resist the hard and quick motions that encourage ejaculation.
- Couple Communication. If a man is feeling stressed, shy or tense about premature ejaculation, he is more likely to have problems. By talking with his partner, he can feel more confident about dealing with the situation. Men often find that they have fewer concerns with premature ejaculation when they feel comfortable in their relationship and the situation is familiar.
- Numbing creams – Mandelay (gel) and Stud 100 (spray) are some examples. The active ingredient, benzocaine, numbs the genital area and helps slow the onset of ejaculation. However, because it is a numbing agent, many men find it also reduces the sensitivity and pleasure of intercourse.
- Condoms - Using thicker or even normal condoms can effectively reduce some of the sensations associated with intercourse and thus delay ejaculation.

- Counseling – When dealing with persistent psychologically related premature ejaculation, psychotherapy or related treatment is sometimes helpful. Counseling can be individual or couple based.
- Drugs – In some cases doctors prescribe antidepressants such as Prozac, Paxil or Zoloft to treat premature ejaculation.

www.mensclinic.com

www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/programs/sexualhealth/pdf/premature_ejaculation.pdf

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/001524.htm>