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## EVALUATING ERECTILE DYSFUNCTION

Many men feel embarrassed to talk to a doctor about erectile dysfunction (ED). This common problem can be treated, but only if your doctor knows about it. Your doctor will likely ask you questions about your ED. Whether you're asked or not, tell your doctor anything that might help your doctor understand the problem. Your doctor may do an exam and may run some tests to help find the cause of your ED.

ED can have many causes. Most are physical. Some are emotional issues. Causes of ED may include:

- Medical conditions such as diabetes or depression
- Smoking tobacco or marijuana
- Excessive alcohol
- Side effects of prescription medications
- Nerve or blood vessel injury
- Emotional stress or relationship problems

A medical exam may help your doctor understand what is causing your problem. ED is sometimes the first sign of some other health problem, so your doctor may check your overall health. Your doctor may also examine your penis, scrotum, and testicles. Tell your doctor about all of the medications you take, including prescribed, over-the-counter, and any herbs or supplements.

Your doctor may recommend some or all of these tests:

- Blood test to measure your level of hormones, or to check for diabetes to help show the health of your liver, kidneys and prostate.
- A blood flow test that will show how well blood moves through your penis.
- A rectal exam to check for an enlarged prostate gland. In recent studies, an enlarged prostate and ED have been linked.

Prescription medications for ED are available, which may help. Other treatment options are available, including erectile aids and surgery. Your doctor can tell you more about the treatment that is right for you.

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