

Impotence not an inevitable part of aging

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(HealthDay)—While the risk of impotence—erectile dysfunction—increases with age, men should know it's not an inevitable part of growing older, experts say.

About 30 million American [men](#) have [erectile dysfunction](#). Worldwide, the number is expected to reach 320 million by 2025, researchers have estimated.

The problem affects 22 percent of men older than 60, and 30 percent of men older than 70. But the condition is most likely due to an underlying physical or mental health condition rather than older age, according to [doctors](#) from Texas A&M University in College Station.

Heart disease and other serious medical conditions—such as diabetes, kidney disease, multiple sclerosis and Parkinson's disease—can cause erectile dysfunction, the [experts](#) explained.

Certain medications, including antidepressants, antihistamines and blood pressure drugs, can also cause erectile dysfunction. These medications can affect nerves, blood circulation or hormones. If you suspect that's the case, talk to your doctor, the experts said.

Another potential cause of erectile dysfunction is emotional distress caused by relationship problems, depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, guilt and fear of sexual failure.

Unhealthy lifestyle habits—such as being overweight, smoking and excess drinking, and drug abuse—can also lead to erectile dysfunction. Eating foods high in flavonoids, such as blueberries, may reduce the risk of impotence, the experts noted in a university news release.

In addition, injuries to the lower body may also cause erectile dysfunction. So while exercise is healthy, men should be cautious about any activity that may put their lower body at [risk](#) for injury. However, despite concerns that cycling may contribute to erectile dysfunction, the experts said recent research has found this isn't true.

More information: The American Academy of Family Physicians has more on [erectile dysfunction](#).

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