

# Intimacy and chronic illness



Iris Zink, NP

## Objectives:

The audience will be able to:

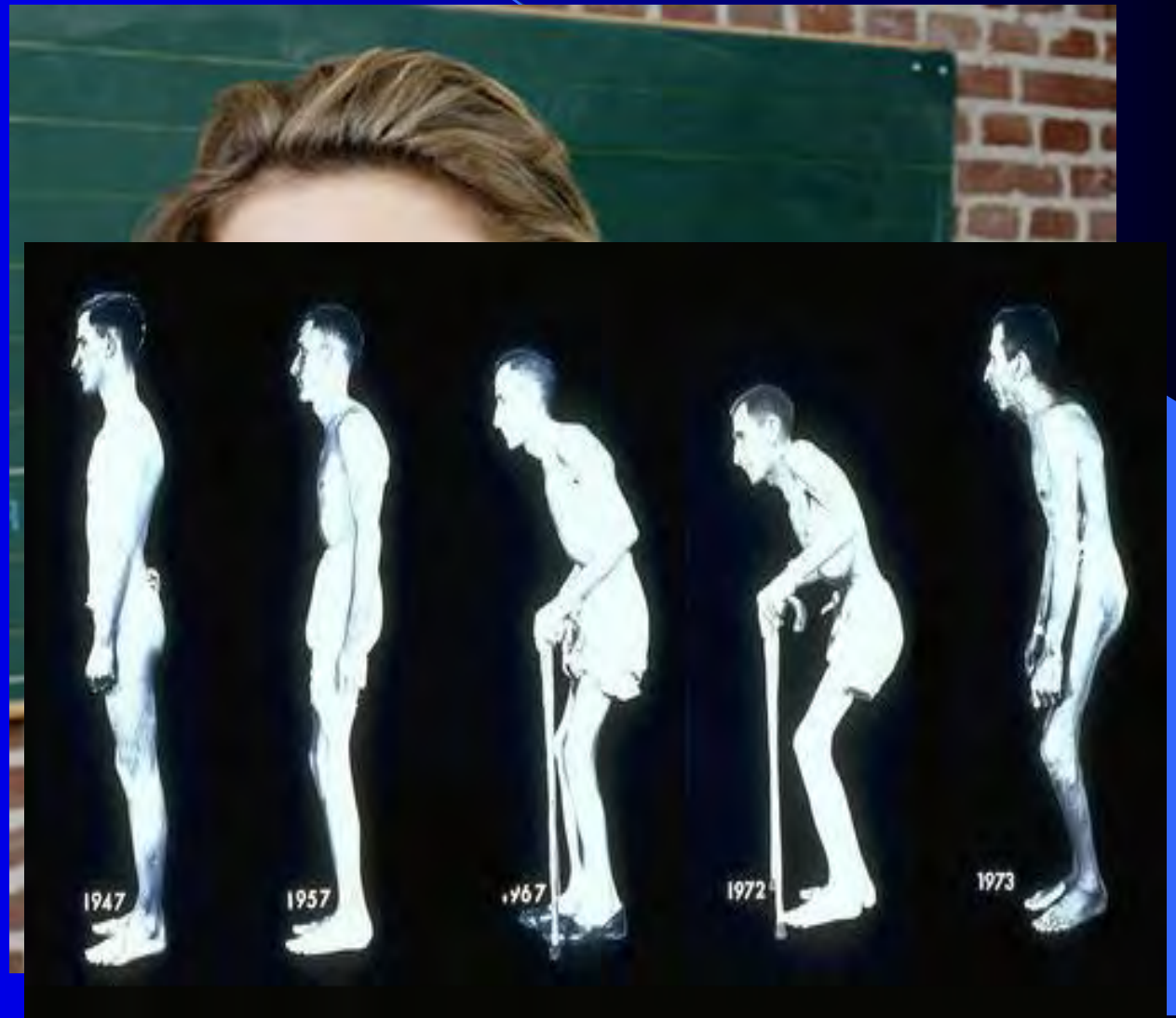
1. identify at least (2) of the 10 myths about sexual intimacy
2. identify at least (3) most common patient concerns related to intimacy and their health
3. identify at least (3) domains on the wheel of total health
4. identify (2) of the (3) factors which are imperative to maintenance of a healthy intimate relationship
5. identify the (2) largest sexual organs on the body
6. Identify relationship builders and busters



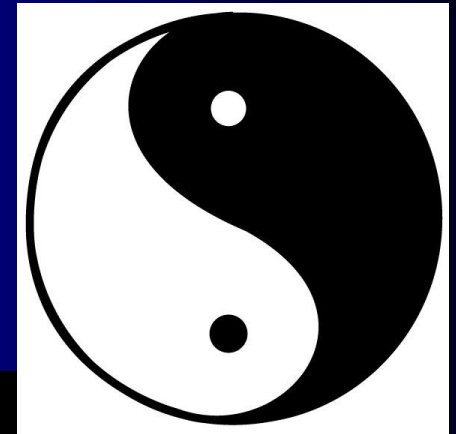


# Why?

Mary



# Holistic Self



American Pie



- Psychological Health
- Social Health
- Sexual Health
- Physical Health
- Spiritual Health



# Whom?

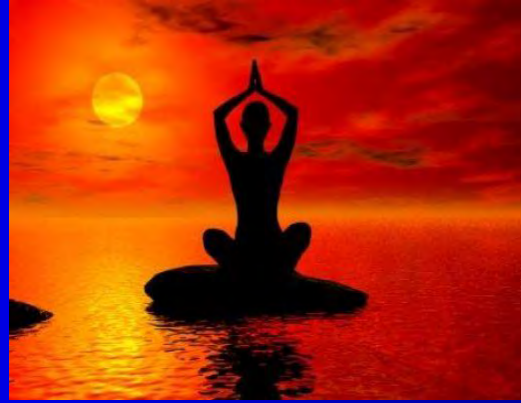
- 2/3 of pts with hip and back OA experience sexual problems
- 62% of pts with RA reported difficulties with sexual performance
- 50% of AS pts report issues with ↓ in desire, satisfaction and frequency of sex
- 71% of pts said their FMS had put a strain on their relationship
- 50% of ♀ and 75% of ♂ report sexual dysfx during course of MS

See reference articles 1,5,9.

# Disease states that affect sexual health

- Psoriasis/ eczema/ neurofibromatosis
- DM
- Sleep apnea
- MS
- Spinal cord injury
- Arthritis
- COPD/ emphysema
- Asthma/pulm disease
- Cancer
- SLE/Sjogren
- Post surgery pts  
mastectomy, hysterectomy  
prostatectomy
- CVD post MI or CVA
- Parkinson
- Deafness, blindness
- HTN
- Depression
- Crohns/UC
- FMS

# Define sexuality



- “the ultimate union of body and mind”  
(Clayton and Ramamurthy)
- Adult time: the playground for adults.
- “If you believe you shouldn’t enjoy sex, then you won’t” (Locker, S. Complete Idiots Guide)





# Acknowledge importance of Touch

- Provides a connection
- Conveys affirmation
- Reassures the patient
- Decreases stress
- Improves self esteem



# Why do we need sex?

- Even among non-humans, sex appears to be regularly practiced for a whole range of non-reproductive benefits.
- Homosexual behavior occurs in  $> 450$  species: kissing bonobos, nuzzling zebras and necking among giraffes
- Sex is fun but so is gardening, traveling and playing cards, but when was the last time you woke up with your heart racing thinking about garden plants?



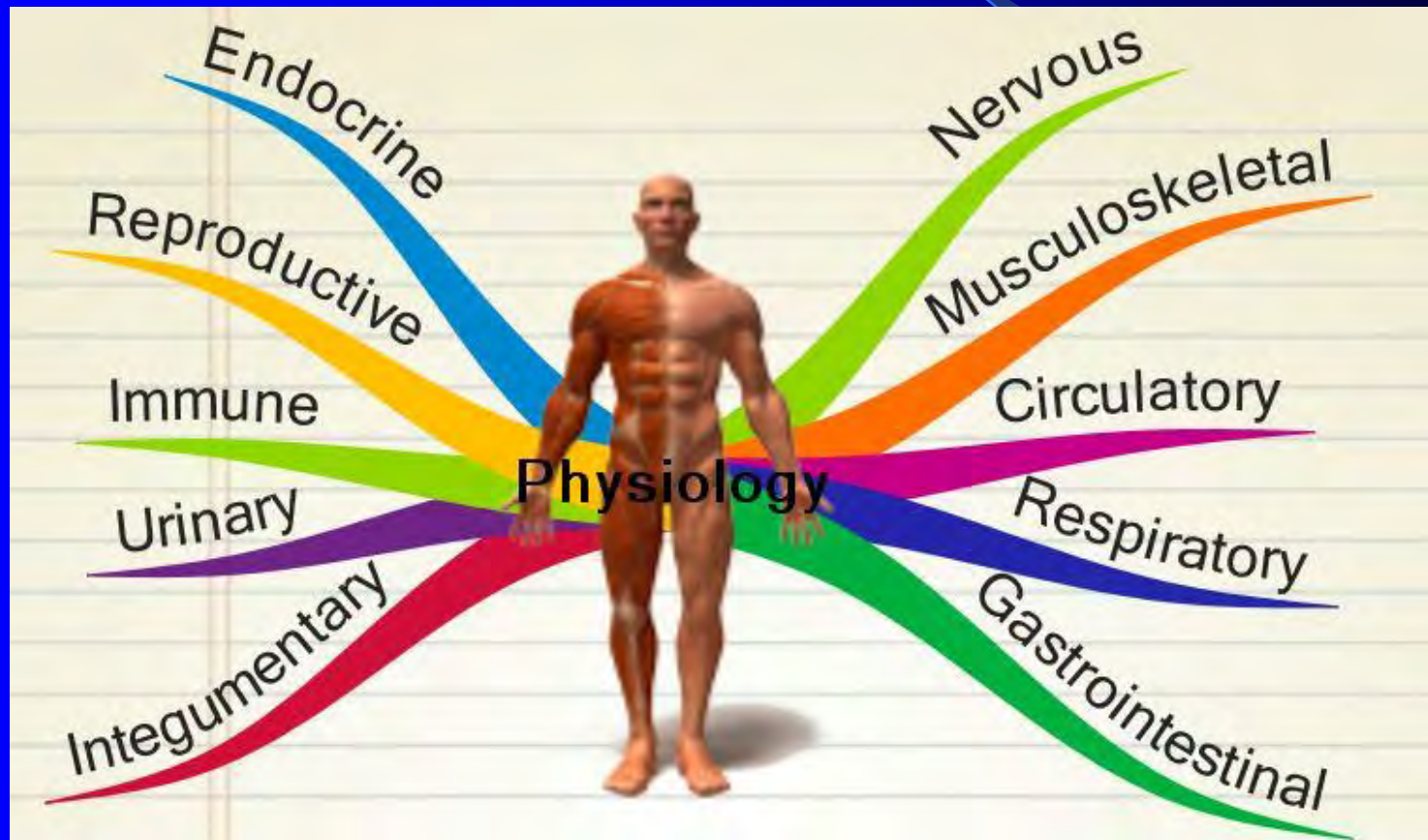
# L.S.D.s.



Love yourself enough to take care of yourself



# Orgasm and Laughter are a part of our basic physiology





# Maintaining your support network: Ashley's story



# What really happens?

- ♥ ↑ heart rate
- ♥ ↑ muscle tension
- ♥ ↑ blood flow
- ♥ ↑ body warmth
- ♥ ↑ lubrication
- 💣 swelling of the clitoris
- 💣 swelling of vaginal lips
- 💣 penile erection
- 💣 nipple erections
- 💣 ↑ sensitivity to stimulation
- 💣 ↓ sensitivity to pain

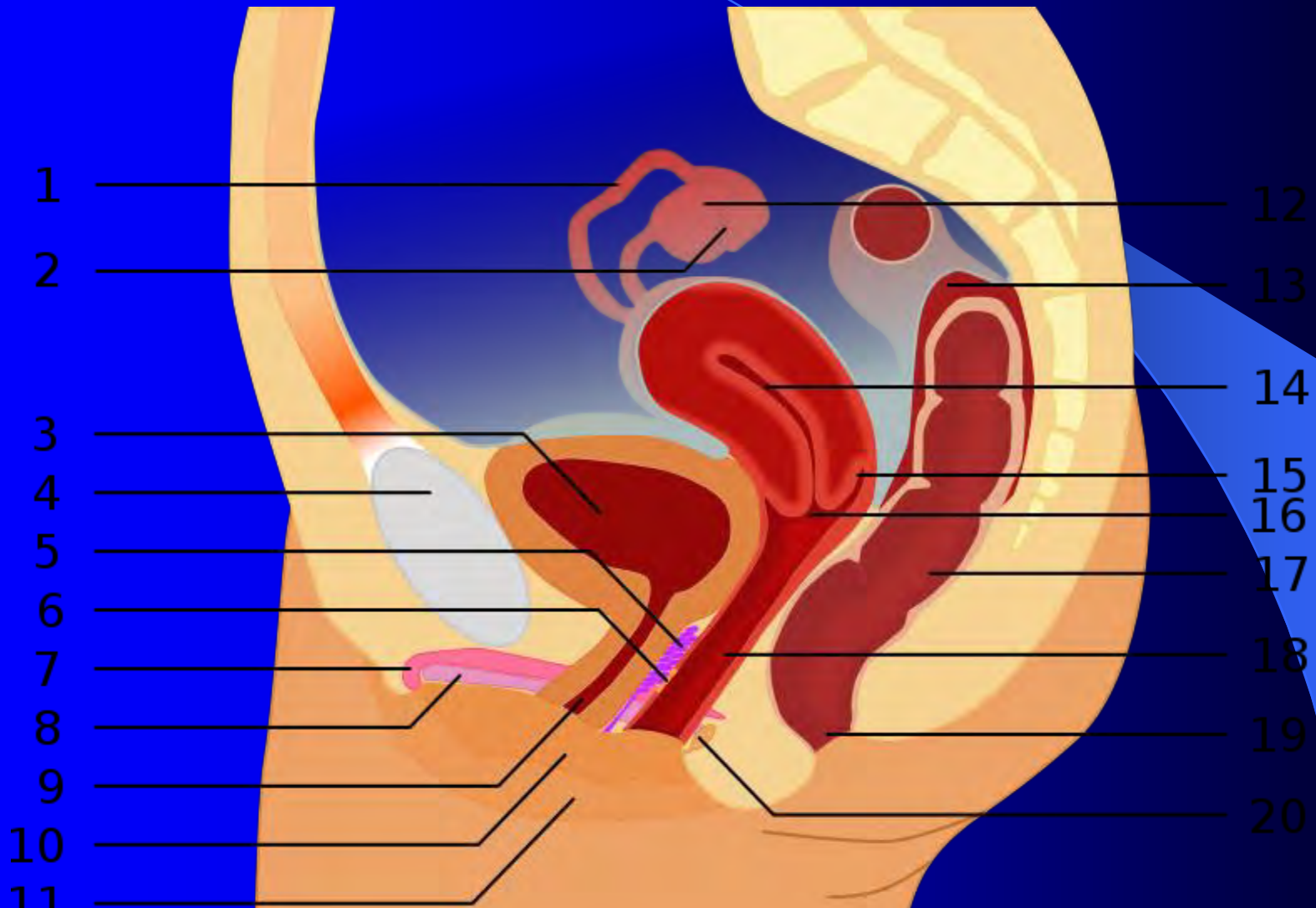






**Bonobos and humans utilize sexuality for social purposes:  
Tension reduction, bonding, conflict resolution, entertainment...**

# G-Spot

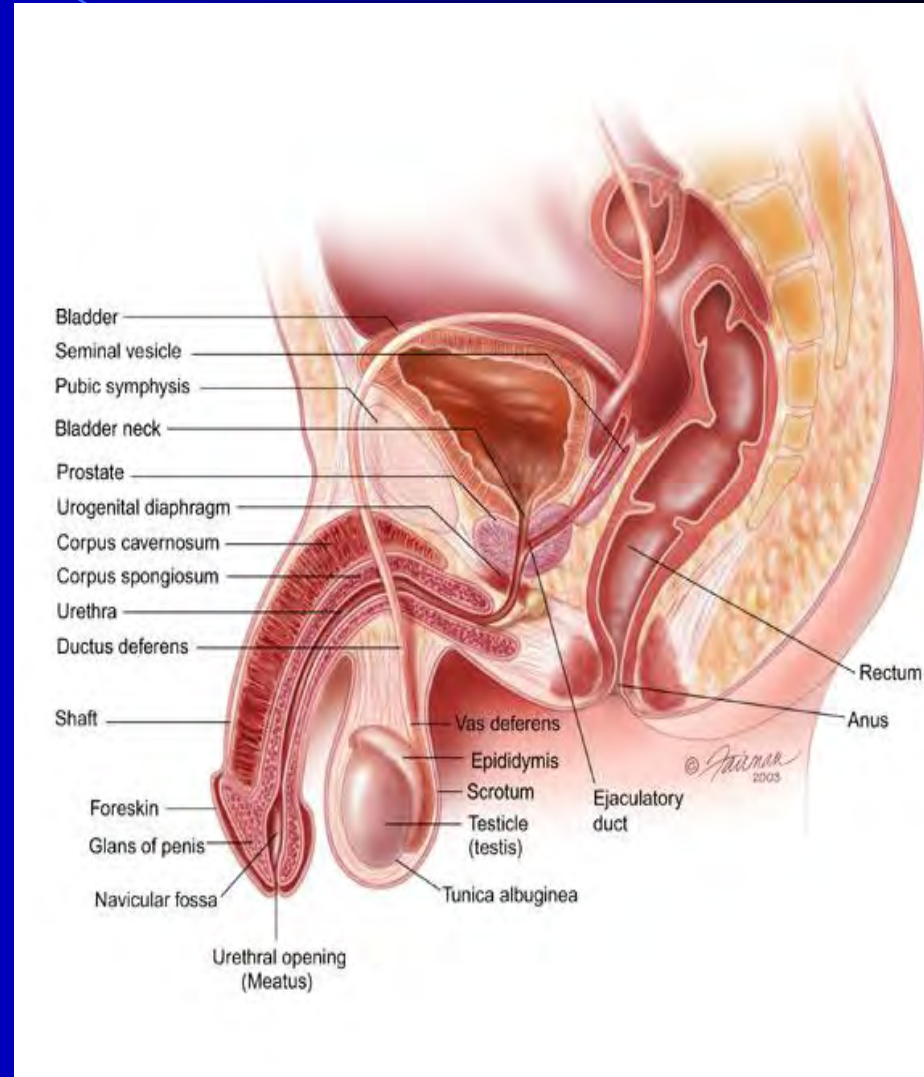
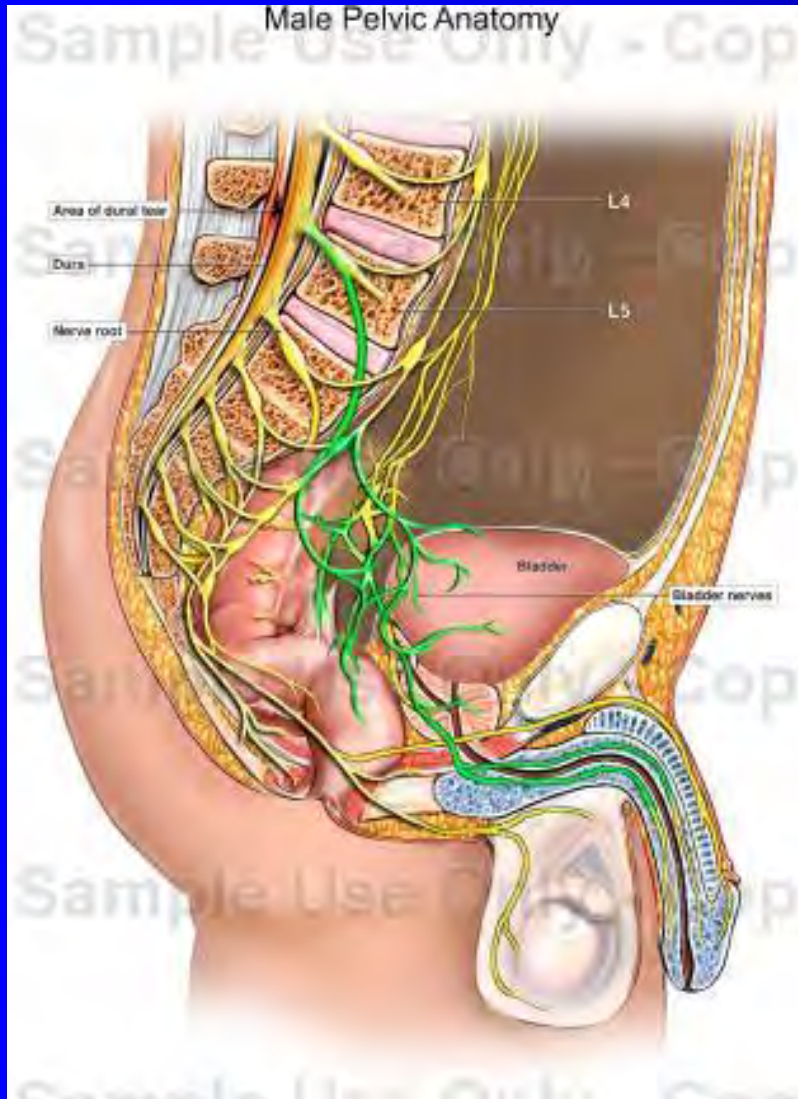


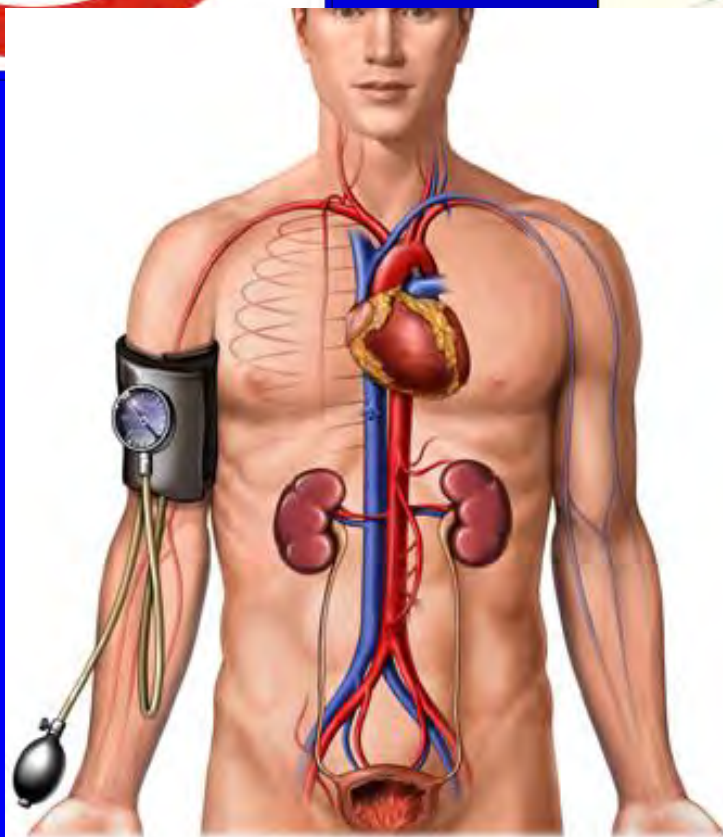
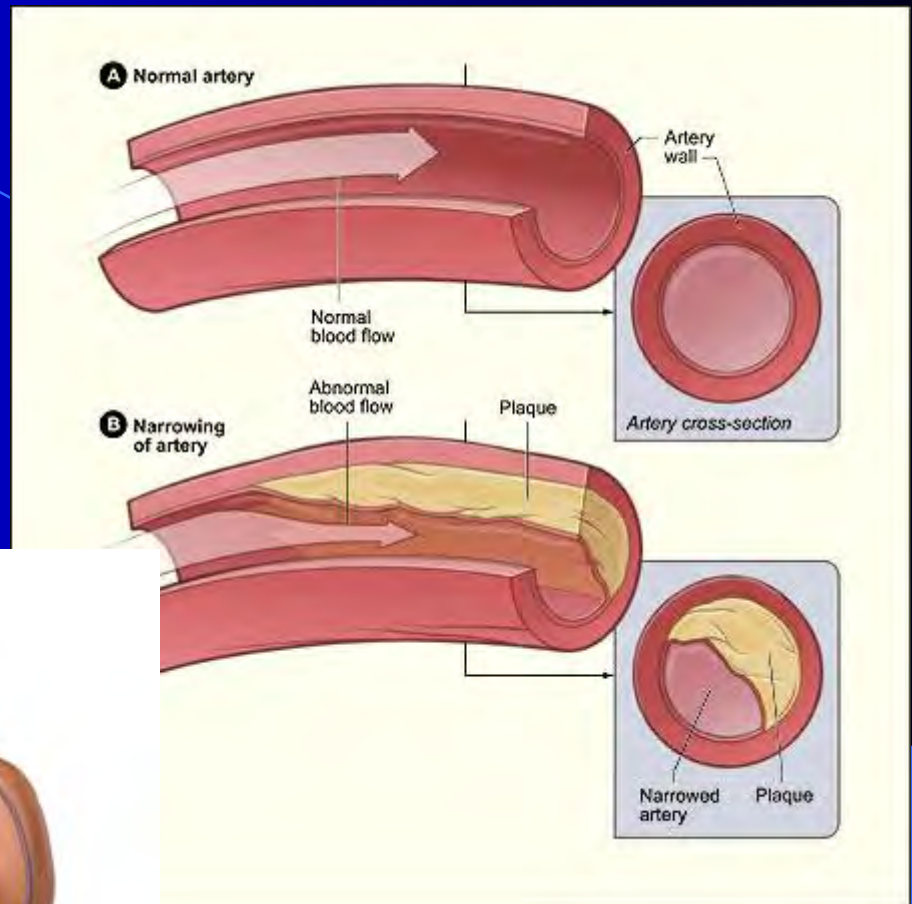
Gräfenberg spot, named for German gynecologist Ernst Gräfenberg



# Anatomy

Male Pelvic Anatomy





# What is normal?

- Appearance
- Feelings
- Concerns
- Frequency



Marek Benko 2004



# Self acceptance



Proportional Body Fat



# D & D



**“Sexual dysfunction is often the first manifestation of physical illness but is often not inquired about on routine review of systems.”**



*(Clayton, A & Ramamurthy, S, The impact of illness on sexual dysfunction. 2008)*

# Stress as a factor



- Sex for men is a stress reliever
- Sex for women requires stress relief





# Mating Call





# Timing is everything



3



30



# Lefty



# Lindsey

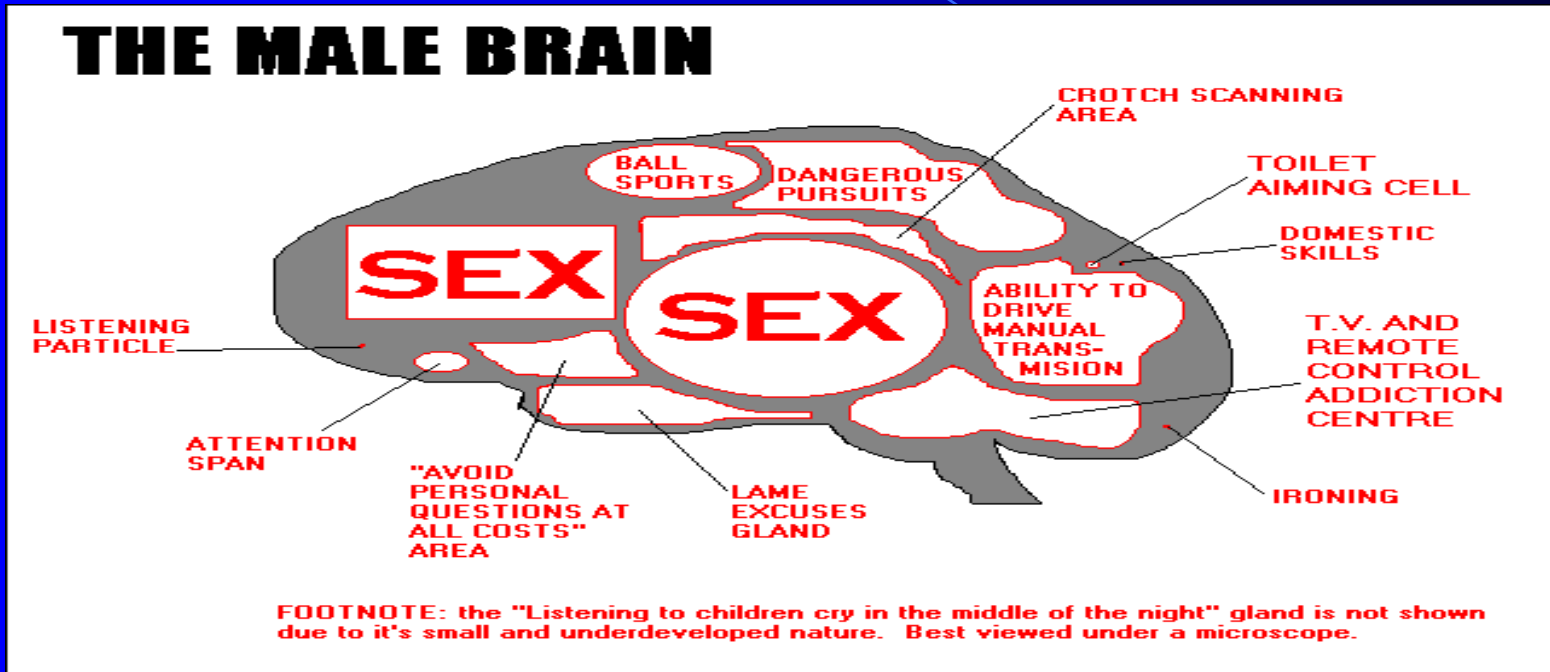




# Linda & Ann



# The brain what is going on up there?



- Oxytocin
- DHEA
- Testosterone
- progesterone
- Nitric oxide
- Dopamine
- Serotonin
- norepinephrine





# The 2 largest sexual organs?

1. Brain (90% OF SEX IS IN THE MIND)
  2. Skin
- stimulation and desire



# Patient concerns

- Ability to satisfy partner
- Lack of sexual desire
- Change in role status
- Change in partner perception
- Pain during sex
- Death
- Privacy \*\*
- Ejaculatory dysfunction
- Anorgasmia
- Fatigue
- Shortness of breath
- Communication barriers (sex, needs and anxiety)
- Urinary incontinence
- Spasticity





*I can do six weeks standing on head. I'm a sexual camel.*

~GEORGE



# Top 10 myths of sex

- 1) sex = intercourse
- 2) Sex goal = orgasm
- 3) General health does not affect sexual health
- 4) Use of sexual aids is not sexy
- 5) Good sex just happens
- 6) Disabled people are not sexual
- 7) There comes a time when sex isn't important
- 8) My health and physical changes no longer make me attractive
- 9) I am who I am sexually because of my parts
- 10) There is nothing more I could possibly learn about sex



# You are never too old for sex.....



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# Why is sex sooo great?





# Kissing



- According to German psychologist Dr. Arthur Sazbo, a study found that those who kiss their spouse each morning miss less work because of illness than those who do not. They also have fewer auto accidents on the way to work. They earn 20 to 30 percent more monthly and they live about five years more than those who don't even give each other a peck on the cheek.



# 10 Surprising Health Benefits of Sex

The perks of sex extend well beyond the bedroom.

By Kara Mayer Robinson

FROM THE WEBMD ARCHIVES

[Sex](#) not only feels good. It can also be good for you. Here's what a healthy [sex](#) life can do for you.

## 1. Helps Keep Your Immune System Humming

"Sexually active people take fewer sick days," says Yvonne K. Fulbright, PhD a [sexual health](#) expert.

People who have sex have higher levels of what defends your body against germs, viruses, and other intruders. Researchers at Wilkes University in Pennsylvania found that college students who had sex once or twice a week had higher levels of the a certain antibody compared to students who had sex less often.

## 2. Boosts Your Libido

Longing for a more lively sex life? "Having sex will make sex better and will improve your [libido](#)," says Lauren Streicher, MD. She is an assistant clinical professor of obstetrics and gynecology at Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine in Chicago.

For women, having sex ups vaginal lubrication, [blood](#) flow, and elasticity, she says, all of which make sex feel better and help you crave more of it.

## 3. Improves Women's Bladder Control

A strong pelvic floor is important for avoiding [incontinence](#), something that will affect about 30% of women at some point in their lives.

Good sex is like a [workout](#) for your pelvic floor muscles. When you have an orgasm, it causes [contractions](#) in those muscles, which strengthens them.

## 4. Lowers Your Blood Pressure

Research suggests a link between sex and lower [blood pressure](#), says Joseph J. Pinzone, MD. He is CEO and medical director of Amai Wellness.

"There have been many studies," he says. "One landmark study found that sexual intercourse specifically (not [masturbation](#)) lowered systolic blood pressure." That's the first number on your blood pressure test.

## 5. Counts as Exercise

"Sex is a really great form of [exercise](#)," Pinzone says. It won't replace the treadmill, but it counts for something.

Sex uses about five calories per minute, four more calories than watching TV. It gives you a one-two punch: It bumps up your [heart rate](#) and uses various muscles.

So get busy! You may even want to clear your schedule to make time for it on a regular basis. "Like with exercise, consistency helps maximize the benefits," Pinzone says.

## 6. Lowers Heart Attack Risk

A good sex life is good for your [heart](#). Besides being a great way to raise your heart rate, sex helps keep your [estrogen](#) and [testosterone](#) levels in balance.

"When either one of those is low you begin to get lots of problems, like [osteoporosis](#) and even [heart disease](#)," Pinzone says.

Having sex more often may help. During one study, men who had sex at least twice a week were half as likely to die of [heart disease](#) as men who had sex rarely.

## 7. Lessens Pain

Before you reach for an [aspirin](#), try for an orgasm.

"Orgasm can block pain," says Barry R. Komisaruk, PhD, a distinguished service professor at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey. It releases a hormone that helps raise your pain threshold.

Stimulation without orgasm can also do the trick. "We've found that vaginal stimulation can block chronic back and [leg pain](#), and many women have told us that genital self-stimulation can reduce menstrual [cramps](#), arthritic pain, and in some cases even [headaches](#)," Komisaruk says.

## 8. May Make Prostate Cancer Less Likely

Going for the gusto may help ward off [prostate cancer](#).

Men who ejaculated frequently (at least 21 times a month) were less likely to get [prostate cancer](#) during one study, which was published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

You don't need a partner to reap this benefit: Sexual intercourse, nocturnal emission, and masturbation were all part of the equation.

It's not clear that sex was the only reason that mattered in that study. Lots of factors affect [cancer](#) risk. But more sex won't hurt.

WebMD Feature Reviewed by [Michael W. Smith, MD](#) on October 24, 2013

## 9. Improves Sleep

You may nod off more quickly after sex, and for good reason.

"After orgasm, the hormone [prolactin](#) is released, which is responsible for the feelings of relaxation and sleepiness" after sex, says Sheenie Ambardar, MD. She is a [psychiatrist](#) in West Hollywood, Calif.

## 10. Eases Stress

Being close to your partner can soothe stress and [anxiety](#).

Ambardar says touching and hugging can release your body's natural "feel-good hormone." Sexual arousal releases a [brain](#) chemical that revs up your [brain](#)'s pleasure and reward system.

Sex and [intimacy](#) can boost your self-esteem and happiness, too, Ambardar says. It's not only a prescription for a healthy life, but a happy one.

WebMD Feature Reviewed by [Michael W. Smith, MD](#) on October 24, 2013

# Never underestimate the power of a squeeze.

- Dr Arnold Kegel 1952 study on pelvic floor hypotonus.





# Neuropathy and Sjogren Syndrome

- ❖ 10-38% have peripheral neuropathy
- ❖ 35-40% have Raynauds

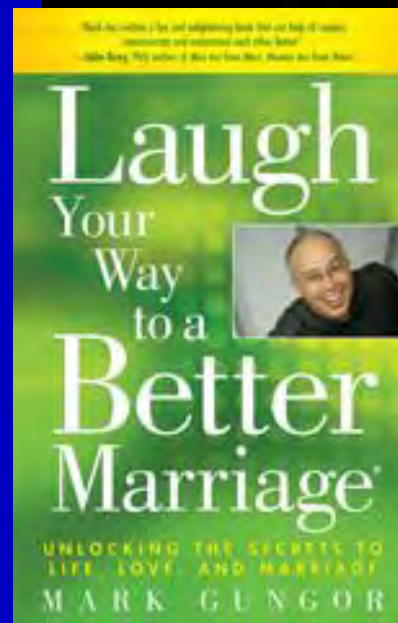
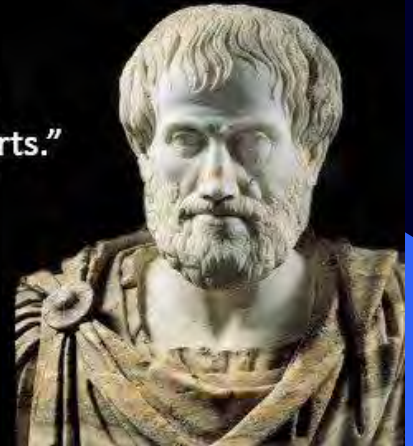


# NO PORN OH!



"The whole is greater  
than the sum of its parts."

-Aristotle

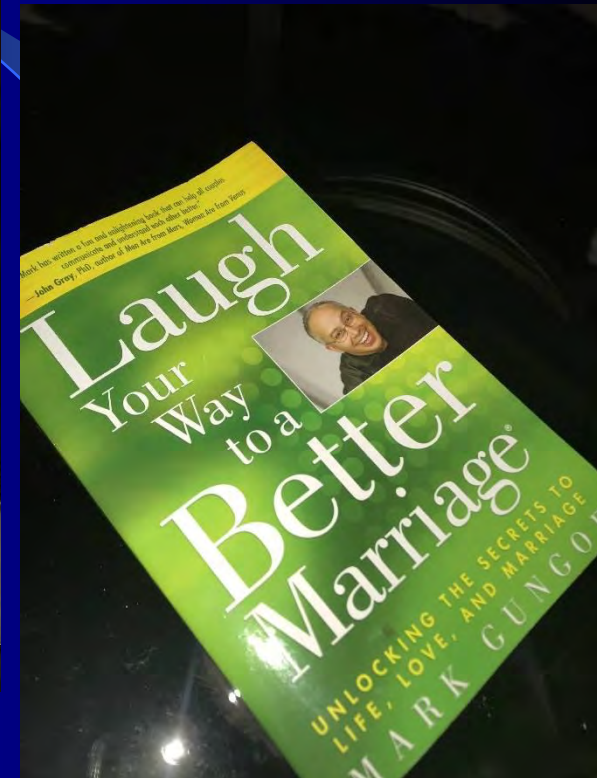
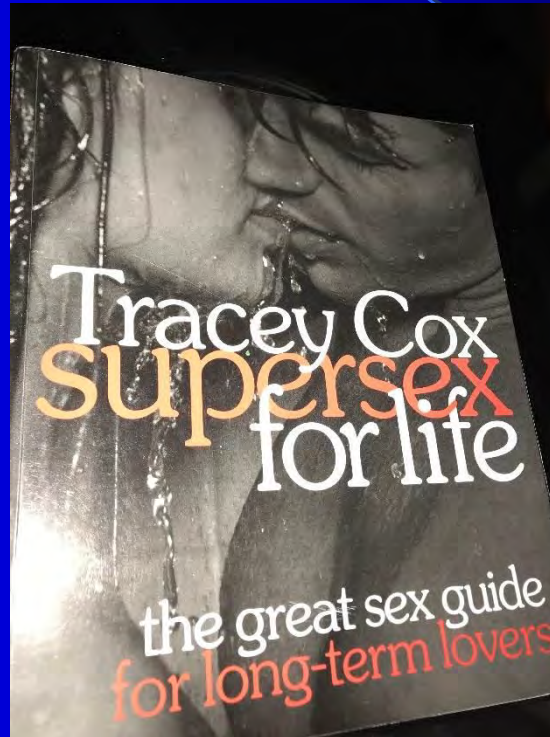


# Just do IT!!



"Some people want it  
to happen.  
Some wish it  
would happen.  
Others make it happen."

- Michael Jordan

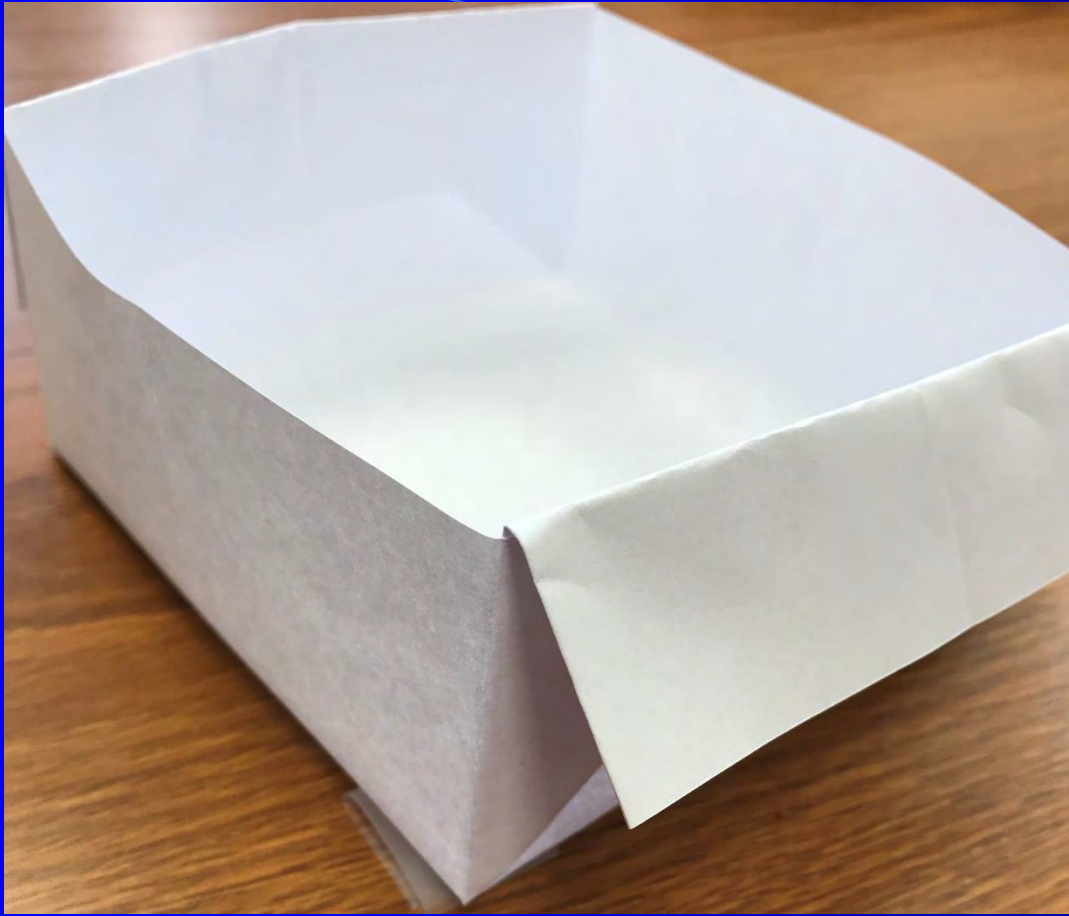




# Do NOT emasculate your spouse



**I'm  
searching  
for a perfect  
man like  
me.**



Men have it, women need it!

# Tools for the patients

- ♥ S Self confidence & sense of self
- ♥ H keep their sense of Humor
- ♥ E Enthusiasm, drive and desire
- ♥ E Education
- ♥ T Tools and support system
- ♥ S Spirit and keep some patience



# Tools



# Communication, Communication Communication



# Communication tips: Let's talk about sex baby.

- Start with the word “I”
- I have noticed....
- I like it when we.....
- I like it when you touch me....
- I would really like to try \_\_\_\_\_
- I heard a study where people \_\_\_\_\_.
- Talk with your clothes on first.



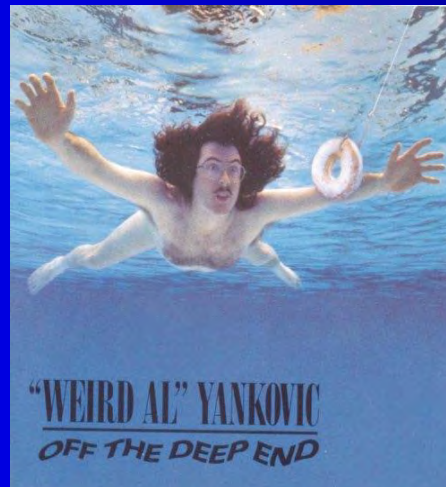
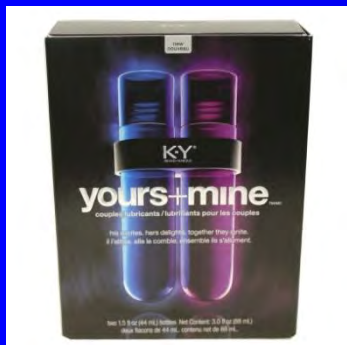


# Know your target



# Lubes and Meds

- 💧 KY jelly or beads
- 💧 Vagifem tabs
- 💧 Estrogen cream or rings
- 💧 Replens
- 💧 Astroglide
- 💧 Baby oil aloe infused
- 💧 Vitamin E
- 💧 Coconut oil



- 😊 Viagra
- 😊 Levitra
- 😊 Cialis
- 😊 Caverject
- 😊 Vacuum pumps
- 😊 Addyi ???



# ***HOMEWORK***



1. Talk to one another
2. Spend 30 min touching each other without intercourse or orgasm
3. If you are interested in steamy sex talk, you have to practice.
4. Know your body and what makes you aroused.
5. Date!!! Make it a priority!



# Summary

- 💣 Know how you feel about sex
- 💣 Try not to appear shocked
- 💣 Treat the patient holistically and bring it up
- 💣 Know your resources and do not be afraid to refer patients out
- 💣 Exercise makes everything better



# Resources

- American Association of sex educators, counselors, and therapists. ([www.aasect.org](http://www.aasect.org))
- The American board of Sexology. ([www.sexologist.org](http://www.sexologist.org))
- International Society of the study of Women's Sexual Health. (<http://www.isswsh.org>)
- The Society of Sex therapy and research. (<http://www.sstarnet.org>)
- National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health (NPWH.org)
- Menopause.com

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