

September newsletter from your healthcare providers Canterbury Wellness Center

In this issue we bring you information about a book that serves as a great resource for cancer survivors, tips for overcoming those excuses we all make to avoid physical activity, research on the link between obesity and libido, and a reminder about the importance of sleep for those youngsters headed back to school this fall.

Caring for the whole mind, body, and spirit:

After Cancer Treatment: Heal Faster, Better, Stronger

A book by Dr. Julie Silver

Taken from the Johns Hopkins University Press Website: At age 36, Julie Silver was enjoying an exciting career as a physician at the Harvard Medical School and a rewarding personal life as a mother, wife, and award-winning writer. But she had the sense that something was wrong. Two years and multiple doctors later, she was diagnosed with the breast cancer she had suspected all along and was catapulted into the role of cancer patient. Like many cancer patients who experience serious side effects from treatment, Dr. Silver emerged from therapy feeling not better, but exhausted and physically devastated. As she worked to heal herself, she became determined to write a book to help others recover after cancer treatment. Here Dr. Silver shares her own cancer journey and offers a step-by-step plan for physical healing, including exercise and diet recommendations and instructions for fighting fatigue, monitoring mood, and overcoming setbacks. Dr. Silver's advice comes from the heart—and from her experience as both a cancer survivor and a doctor who has spent her career helping people heal from serious illnesses and injuries. No matter where they are in their own journey with cancer, readers will find *After Cancer Treatment* a personal, practical, and powerful guide to recovery.

A Johns Hopkins Press Health Book: ISBN: 978-0801884382

Overcoming Barriers

How do I get past the barriers to being physically active?

(From the American Diabetes Association: www.Diabetes.org)

If you're not active, it's likely that you have at least one reason why. Perhaps you've never been very active. Maybe you're afraid you'll get low blood glucose. Think about what's keeping you from being active and then look into ways to overcome the barriers.

Barriers

I don't have time to exercise for 30 minutes a day.

I'm too tired after work.

I don't have the right clothes.

Solutions

Do as much as you can. Every step counts. If you're just starting out, start with 10 minutes a day and add more little by little. Work up to 10 minutes at a time, three times a day.

Plan to do something active before work or during the day.

Wear anything that's comfortable as long as you have shoes that fit well and socks that don't irritate your skin.

I'm too shy to exercise in a group.

Choose an activity you can do on your own, such as following along with an aerobics class on TV or going for a walk. Exercise shouldn't hurt if you go slowly at first. Choose something you can do without getting sore. Learn how to warm up and stretch before you do something active and how to cool down afterward. If you're taking a medication that could cause low blood glucose, talk to your health care provider about ways to exercise safely.

I don't want to have sore muscles.

I'm afraid I'll get low blood glucose.

Walking hurts my knees.
It's too hot outside.

Try chair exercises or swimming. If it's too hot, too cold, or too humid, walk inside a school or a shopping center.

It's not safe to walk in my neighborhood.

Find an indoor activity, such as an exercise class at a community center.

I'm afraid I'll make my condition worse.

Get a checkup before planning your fitness routine. Learn what's safe for you to do.

I can't afford to join a fitness center or buy equipment.

Do something that doesn't require fancy equipment, such as walking or using cans of food for weights.

Exercise is boring.

Find something you enjoy doing. Try different activities on different days.

Better Sex: What's Weight Got to Do with It?

[Being overweight does affect your libido.
But small changes can jump-start your sex drive.](#)

By Colette Bouchez

WebMD Weight Loss Clinic-Feature

Reviewed by Charlotte E. Grayson Mathis, MD

From *Sex in the City* to *Desperate Housewives*, there's one media message that's louder and clearer than ever: Looking, feeling, acting, and just *being* sexy is the order of the day.

But cultural messages also continue to tell us that no one bigger than a size 6 should be singing the siren song of sexuality. Much like oil and water, being overweight and sexy just don't mix. For those already struggling with weight and image issues, that powerful message can easily throw a wet blanket on even the most active libido.

"Unfortunately, people are internalizing society's definition of what it takes to be involved in sex, particularly the body shape -- there are clearly societal biases out there that are influencing us on an individual level and not in a good way," says Martin Binks, PhD, a clinical psychologist and director of behavioral health at Duke University's Diet and Fitness Center in Durham, N.C.

But it turns out that cultural messages aren't the whole story. New research suggests certain physical conditions that go along with obesity also affect sex drive, further dampening the desires of those who are overweight. The good news: You can make some changes to your body (and how you think about your body) to enhance your libido. You can:

- Lose a little weight, even 10 pounds, to stimulate sex hormones
- Eat more nutritious foods, which control cholesterol and blood sugar levels
- Key your workouts to getting blood flowing to the pelvic area
- Pick up a sexy novel and start reading
- Accept your body at any size
- Believe in your sensuality

How to begin? Start by identifying the physical and psychological obstacles that could be standing in your way to a fulfilling sex life.

How Too Much Weight Hampers Sex Drive

According to a recent study conducted by Binks and his colleagues at Duke, up to 30% of obese people seeking help controlling their weight indicate problems with sex drive, desire, performance, or all three. Often, the latest research shows, these problems can be traced to physical conditions that co-exist with obesity.

"Medical conditions such as high cholesterol and insulin resistance [an early indicator of type 2 diabetes] do have the ability to impact sexual performance, which in turn impacts desire, particularly in men," says Andrew McCollough, MD, director of sexual health and male infertility at NYU Medical Center in New York.

Because both conditions can cause the tiny arteries in the penis to shut down, particularly when vessel-clogging fatty deposits begin to form, McCollough says impotence or erectile dysfunction is often the result.

"A man who has problems having an erection is going to lose his desire for sex in not too long a time," says McCollough.

Men aren't alone with sex problems caused by poor blood flow. Research shows overweight women's sex drive and desire are affected by the same problem.

"We are beginning to see that the width of the blood vessels leading to the clitoris [the area of the vagina most closely related to sexual response] in women are affected by the same kind of blockages that impact blood flow to the penis," says Susan Kellogg, PhD, director of sexual medicine at the Pelvic and Sexual Health Institute of Graduate Hospital in Philadelphia.

When this happens, says Kellogg, a woman's body is far less responsive, and a drop in desire is not far behind.

Complicating matters further for both sexes: The more body fat you have, the higher your levels of a natural chemical known as SHBG (short for sex hormone binding globulin). It's aptly named because it binds to the sex hormone testosterone. Doctors theorize that the more testosterone that is bound to SHBG, the less there is available to stimulate desire.

Simple Changes to Boost Your Sex Drive

What can you do to improve your physical conditioning for sex? Plenty. Experts say losing as few as 10 pounds can often free up testosterone and almost immediately give a boost to your love life.

Even better news. Making the same diet changes -- such as following a low-fat diet and eating lots of fruit and vegetables -- that help get blood sugar and cholesterol under control can also help turn your sex drive around -- even if you don't lose weight.

Says Binks, "I've noted that very often when patients start to take better care of themselves, they also report a substantial increase in their interest in sex -- I think participation in a healthy lifestyle really helps, even if you don't lose the extra pounds."

Also, Kellogg says exercises designed not for weight loss but to increase circulation to the genitals can make a big difference, particularly for women.

"Any activity that increases blood flow to the large muscle groups in the thighs, buttocks, and pelvis -- such as yoga, brisk walking, or cycling for 20 minutes three times a week -- is also going to bathe the genitals with better circulation," says Kellogg. The result, she says, is more lubrication, better arousal, and better orgasmic function. And ultimately a return of sexual desire.

Kellogg also tells WebMD that women might consider supplementing their sexy workout with a little light erotic reading for 20 minutes three times a week. The goal here: To focus attention back on sex and improve both drive and desire.

"There is nothing sexy about housework or PTA meetings or grocery shopping. If that's taking up all your thoughts, there is no room to think about sex, no matter what your shape or size," says Kellogg.

"Weight becomes less of an issue when a woman simply feels better and feels sexy," she says.

Think Sexy, and You'll Be Sexy

Which leads us to what may be happening in your head. For some people, getting physical problems under control is all it takes to fan the flames of desire. For others, it's still not quite enough.

Experts say that one of the biggest obstacles to enjoying sex at any size is a poor body image. They caution that the inability to accept your weight and your size can leave you sleeping single in a double bed.

"There is this idea out there that if you accept your body and your weight that it's somehow going to take away your motivation to change the way you look -- in a way, society almost tells us that you have to hate your body before you can improve it," says Binks.

This is the kind of attitude, he says, that frequently causes overweight folks to feel so self-conscious about how they look that desire is completely inhibited.

Psychologist and body-image expert Abby Aronowitz, PhD, agrees. "The epitome of sexuality is abandoning self-consciousness to experience the moment intensely. If one is fretting about this bulge or that bulge or how their butt looks from every angle, it's pretty difficult to enjoy the moment, much less be there for your partner," says Aronowitz, author of *Your Final Diet*.

While body image can hamper both men and women, experts agree that women feel the impact more. In fact, Kellogg reports that even women who have loving partners can still view themselves as sexually unattractive if their body image doesn't conform to the "norm."

"If a woman doesn't find herself to be sexually appealing, she will believe she is not sexually appealing to her partner, even if he tells her she is," says Kellogg.

Sexual Desire Still Missing? Get Help.

Although small changes in lifestyle along with some healthy "self-talk" can go a long way toward improving both drive and desire, if you still can't think of yourself as desirable, some professional image counseling may be in order.

"If you are someone who has very negative feelings about your body image, then getting treatment that works toward improving self-esteem will automatically be reflected in your desire for sex and your ability to achieve sexual fulfillment, regardless of your size," says Binks. The best place to start is often

with your family doctor. But if you feel you need more specialized help, experts say, don't hesitate to turn to a counselor with expertise in body image and weight issues.

Above all, remember this: While studies show that up to 30% of overweight people have sexual difficulties, Binks points out that up to 70% of overweight people are doing just fine -- and you can, too.

The key, says Aronowitz, is this: "Don't buy into society's idea of the perfect sexual body, and do allow your own sexuality and sensuality to thrive inside the body you have."

Back to School Tips

Encouraging Healthy Sleep for Your Children

(www.usa.gov - back to school)

Children's health and behavior take a nose dive when their sleep habits are out of whack. Adequate sleep will boost your child's energy and enthusiasm. Good-quality sleep also can help your child learn more easily and reduce many behavioral problems.

How Much Is Enough?

Generally, between the ages of 6 and 9, most children need about 10 hours of sleep a night, while preteens need a little over 9 hours. Your child may require more sleep if he or she:

- Has a short attention span, or is irritable or restless
- Has unusually low energy and activity levels
- Is more tearful, anxious, defensive or impatient than usual

Sleep Tips for Your Children

- Set a regular time for bed each night and stick to it
- Avoid feeding children big meals close to bedtime
- Avoid giving anything with caffeine less than six hours before bedtime
- Make after-dinner playtime a relaxing time
- Establish a calming bedtime routine

***Note:** Each child is different and has his or her own way of approaching sleep. Some take extra time to fall asleep, while others wake more often during the night. You know your child's personal habits best, so with a little trial and error, you should succeed in finding a routine that suits your family.*