

As co-creator of the “Your Voice Your Wish” interactive website advocating the Women’s Initiative in Sexual Health, I’ve always passionately encouraged support for the 43 percent of women who suffer from some form of sexual dysfunction.

As such, I am a strong advocate of supportive, respectful evaluation and effective medical and psychological treatment for this problem and particularly for therapies that are safe and effective. An understanding of the latest solutions and their efficacy is imperative for all healthy men, women and couples in supporting their physical and emotional well-being.

Too many people suffer in silence with low libido or painful sex because the conversation is considered taboo. As a society we must break the silence and offer real solutions. It is vital that we work toward the same social awareness and acceptance of sexual equality for both genders. There should continue to be open discussion of male sexual health issues like erectile dysfunction, testosterone therapy and medications like Viagra and Cialis to address this condition and the ready availability online or at the drugstore of over-the-counter estrogen-free products and supplements that empower people to take positive steps that enhance their sexual relationship. However, with so many brands competing for the consumer’s attention on TV, in magazines, and online, confusion ensues leaving men and women alike asking, “what can I trust.”

As a sexual medicine gynecologist and expert in survivorship medicine, I am always skeptical about new medications purporting to increase desire. However, there are good, safe alternatives to prescription medications to assist with male erectile function and female sexual desire.



To be perfectly clear, many factors can plague a couple's intimate relationships that absolutely will not be fixed by a pill, supplement, moisturizer, gel or lube. Parenthood, the pitter patter of those tiny feet in the hallway, the dog in the middle, harried work schedules, caretaking of elderly parents, self-esteem, exhaustion and even anger, resentment and hostility can all zap a couple's desire.

Just one evening out, a weekly date night, candles and a cocktail or favorite bottle of wine along with kind and gentle words of appreciation might just be the best prescription to recover a neglected relationship and jump start that spark.

But, it's the responsibility of the physician or medical professional to address sexual issues in a comprehensive and integrative way before quickly jumping to prescribe a pill or testosterone therapy to improve erectile dysfunction and desire by examining the entire relationship, not just the erection. In the end, the fact remains that we must introduce men and women to safe, readily available solutions to enhance their relationships.

Here are a few new solutions to counter common troubles many of my patient's experience:

What does the Endothelium have to do with sex? And, the Importance of Nitric Oxide Production

Medical researchers have only recently begun to recognize the importance of the endothelium. Picture the vast network of arteries, veins, and capillaries that make up your circulatory system: The endothelium lines all those blood vessels, which means the body has roughly 60,000 miles- of endothelium cells. One of the [endothelium's](#) primary jobs is to help regulate blood flow through the maze of blood vessels by producing nitric oxide which has a relaxing effect on the blood vessels and helps keep blood circulating smoothly throughout the body, delivering nutrients and oxygen to the brain, muscles, organs, and skin. When nitric oxide levels fall, arteries stiffen and blood circulation is compromised; as a result, the heart is stressed, brain activity suffers and energy and libido decline. Poor circulation can also impair sexual performance in men and women, because the genitalia depend on a vigorous blood supply to achieve satisfaction.

Male erectile function and female sexual desire has a lot to do with [Nitric Oxide \(NO\)](#) production and as people age they produce less and less. A new supplement called Stronvivo helps restore NO production and people report feeling more alert

when they wake, have more energy throughout the day, feel younger, less stressed and more peaceful. Testosterone gels, injections and patches used for low sex drive have been shown to make blood platelets stick together, leading to potential blood clots and an increased risk for heart attack, stroke and other health problems in older men with low hormone levels; making a supplement like Stronvivo an important companion to testosterone treatments as it acts as a systemic [vasodilator](#), platelet aggregation reducer and advanced nitric oxide generator that improves endothelial health.

Stronvivo, an Informed Choice certified nutritional supplement consisting of 5 essential elements: [L-Arginine](#), [L-Citrulline](#), [L-Carnitine Tartrate](#), [Zinc Sulfate](#) and [Magnesium Citrate](#), that stimulates nitric oxide production and supports healthy hormone levels resulting in increased sexual desire for both men and women. Stronvivo improves the health of the endothelium which relaxes smooth muscle tissues, increases blood flow and enables the body to create more Nitric Oxide. Women have reported better lubrication, arousal and orgasm and men, stronger erections—in many cases it's proven a perfect companion to testosterone replacement therapy.

Eliminating painful sex

One of the most common reasons women feign headaches or decline sex is because it hurts. When men take Viagra or Cialis or undergo testosterone therapy or replacement, a women finds herself dry and unable to keep pace.

Dyspareunia, or more commonly known as pain during sexual intercourse, may afflict as many as one in four women. Up to 45 percent of the 65 million menopausal and post-menopausal American women experience pain during sex, according to the North American Menopause Society (NAMS). In addition, up to 90% of women who are cancer survivors may experience chronic vaginal dryness, dyspareunia and other sexual challenges, while more than 40% of women with Type 1 or Type 2 diabetes may suffer with sexual dysfunction.

There continue to be new and improved treatments for vulvar and vaginal atrophy (VVA), as well as dyspareunia including over-the-counter and prescription products and procedures.

I recommend several proven products to my patients including Neogyn, a vulvar soothing cream for external use, [Replens Moisturizer](#) which optimizes hydration of the vaginal mucosal membranes and relieves the chronic vaginal dryness that can contribute to dyspareunia. It's a non-hormonal alternative for vaginal atrophy that has been shown in numerous clinical studies to decrease dyspareunia, improve vaginal dryness, and increase the maturation index, when used regularly. One insertion can last for 3-5 days.

A study in *The New England Journal of Medicine* reported that Replens is as effective at treating vaginal dryness as prescription hormones, stating that Replens "provided relief of vaginal dryness symptoms that was equivalent to that of vaginal estrogen."

Silicone and water-based lubricants like Replens Silky Smooth or [Wet Platinum](#) ease penetration just before intercourse.

[Osphena](#) is a pill available with a doctor's prescription to treat moderate to severe pain experienced during intercourse; symptom of changes in and around the vagina, due to menopause and is classified as a selective estrogen receptor modulator, or SERM. This type of medication acts on tissues like estrogen to help produce vaginal moisture. And, a new laser procedure for VVA/GSM, may also be helpful pending further study.

Too many women suffer in silence with low libido or painful sex because the conversation is taboo; my wish is to break the silence and offer women real solutions.

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Dr. Michael L. Krychman, Executive Director of the Southern California Center for Sexual Health and Survivorship is a world-renowned sexual medicine gynecologist, expert in survivorship medicine, and author of many books including: 100 Questions & Answers about Women's Sexual Wellness and Vitality, and 100 Questions & Answers about Breast Cancer Sensuality, Sexuality and Intimacy. He helps couples overcome challenges to intimacy posed by life-changing events such as serious illness, fertility issues and menopause, working with the latest treatment options available to enhance individual quality of life.