

sextalk.

answers to your questions about sex and relationships

factoid

The #1 thing that helps UA students get a good night's sleep is being prepared for the next day. (UA Quality of Sleep Project, 2005-2006)

Q. During the middle of intercourse and before ejaculation I lost my erection and I could not get another one. What could cause this to happen and is there something that could help?

A. What you describe is known as erectile dysfunction (ED) and it is not uncommon for men to experience ED at various points in their lives. Sometimes the cause is physiological and sometimes it's psychological. Physical causes of ED may include conditions such as kidney, vascular, and neurological diseases, as well as diabetes. Smoking and being overweight don't help either. If you are taking certain drugs – antihistamines, antidepressants, tranquilizers and appetite suppressants – they may cause ED as a side effect.

Psychological issues contribute to almost 20% of erectile dysfunction. Think about the situation: did you feel comfortable with your partner? What were the circumstances and setting? In general, did you feel very comfortable or not? There are many emotions (even subconscious ones that you may not be aware of) that can cause the loss of an erection – guilt, stress, shame, fear of sexual failure, ambivalence, to name a few.

If it happens repeatedly, you would be wise to talk to a doctor to rule out any physical conditions that might lead to erectile difficulty. As you know, there are medications to help maintain erections. A medical provider can prescribe a therapeutic drug like Viagra or Cialis – we're sure you have seen the ads on TV!

The fact that you wrote is a good first step. You might want to schedule a visit with a medical provider here at Campus Health. We have some excellent staff members to help evaluate your situation. The number for appointments in our general medicine clinic is 621-9202. If you think there may possibly be some underlying or unexplored emotional or psychological issues, contact Counseling and Psychological Services at 621-3334. In the meantime... check out www.goaskalice.columbia.edu for hundreds of easy to read, archived answers to questions just like yours.

Have a question? Send it to sextalk@email.arizona.edu

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