

sex talk.

answers to your questions about sex and relationships

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Q Does sex get better with age?

A. Great question! Whether sex gets better with age depends on the person(s) involved and their own experiences. In American culture, there is an attitude that pairs aging with “sexlessness” and the thought that love, sex, and romance belongs to the young. Although there may be a shift, both physiologically and mentally, when it comes to our sexuality and behaviors as we get older, there is no reason for one to go without sexual pleasures, desires, and behaviors into middle adulthood and beyond.

At around age 30, changes in our arousal and response patterns tend to decrease in intensity (Crooks and Baur, 2011). For aging women, it typically takes longer for vaginal lubrication to occur and there may be a decreased intensity in orgasm. For aging men, it usually takes longer to achieve an erection and/or orgasm. Men also experience longer refractory periods (the time it takes to re-boot for round 2). What older people do have in common is the ultimate sex hormone: testosterone. Although men have 20-40 more times the testosterone than women do, women seem

to be much more sensitive to it, and as we age, testosterone decreases dramatically in everyone. This can have huge effects on sexual desires and behaviors. Furthermore, illness and disability can diminish performance and libido.

However, there is a solution to our older, “sexless” lives. Communication. This is key in any relationship, whether it’s marital or purely sexual. The need for intimacy and affection extends into the older years. Speak with your partner, because studies have shown that many older couples often find new techniques despite physical or psychological changes. Fantasy, play, oral sex, toys, manual stimulation, and/or hormone replacement therapies often compensate for the lack of intercourse and opens the door to a much more fulfilling and satisfying sex life in our “golden” years.

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Source: Crooks, R., Baur K. (2011).
Our Sexuality, Eleventh Edition. Chapter 6
and 13. Wadsworth, Cengage Learning.
Belmont, California.



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

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