

Sexual side effects

Most antidepressants cause sexual side effects that can last throughout treatment. They can include decreased sex drive and difficulty reaching orgasm. Some antidepressants may cause trouble getting or keeping an erection (erectile dysfunction). Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) are more likely to cause sexual side effects than other antidepressants are.

Coping strategies

- Consider a medication that requires only a once-a-day dose, and schedule sexual activity before taking that dose.
- Talk to your healthcare provider about adding or switching to an antidepressant that may counteract these effects, such as bupropion (Wellbutrin®).
- Talk to your healthcare provider about a "drug holiday" — stopping medication for a day or so each week to temporarily ease symptoms.
- If you are a man, a medication such as sildenafil (Viagra), vardenafil (Levitra, Staxyn) or tadalafil (Cialis) may temporarily ease sexual side effects. In women, estrogen cream is sometimes used.
- Talk to your partner about your sexual side effects and how they change your needs. Adjusting your sexual routine may be helpful. For example, you may need a longer period of foreplay before having sexual intercourse.