

Preventing Diabetes Complications: Staying Strong and Sexy

What does diabetes have to do with sexual health and performance? Plenty. Men and women with diabetes are more prone to have problems with sexual function. And diabetes increases one's risk for developing urinary tract infections and bladder problems.

What's the connection? Abnormally high blood sugar levels can damage nerves that control sexual responses. And uncontrolled blood sugars can make infections more difficult to treat.

Don't throw in the towel on your love life just yet, however. Here are some proven strategies to help keep you strong and sexy:

1. **Control the controllable.** As with other areas of our lives, we optimize our well-being when we take charge over those things within our control.
2. **Manage blood sugars.** Sexual function is best preserved when blood glucose values stay within a normal range, say experts.
3. **Control blood cholesterol levels.** Arteries clear of cholesterol build-up have better blood flow to all the body's organs, which can improve sexual function.
4. **Control blood pressure.** According to the American Heart Association, women with high blood pressure may have a lower interest in sex. And high blood pressure in men can lead to erectile dysfunction.
5. **Lose weight if you are overweight.** Excess weight -- especially excess belly fat associated with diabetes--can interfere with sexual function, say health experts. Even modest weight loss can significantly improve cholesterol and blood pressure as well.
6. **Don't smoke!** "Smoking has a direct, negative effect on the sexuality of a man on every level," said one researcher involved in a federally-funded study on smoking and sexual health. Do whatever you can to kick the habit or stay away from second-hand smoke.
7. **Move it!** Physical activity such as Dance Out Diabetes not only allows you to shake your booty, it increases energy and stamina, helps lower blood glucose and cholesterol levels...and makes you look and feel attractive.

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