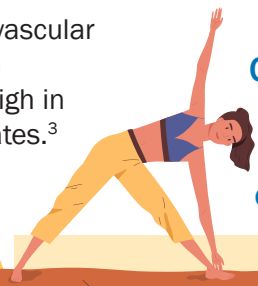


NUTRITION

The same whole food, plant-based diet that supports cardiovascular health, also supports sexual health broadly. Eat a diet rich in vegetables, fruits, nuts, whole grains, and legumes, that is high in antioxidants and low in saturated fat and refined carbohydrates.³

Problems with sexual function are common. Nearly 1/2 of women report issues with desire, arousal, lubrication, orgasm, pain, satisfaction, or intimacy.¹

Choose the type of physical activity you enjoy the most.



PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Regular physical activity promotes sexual health both in the short and long term. It improves mood and the health of your blood vessels.^{4,5}

In addition to aerobic and resistance exercises, consider pelvic floor strengthening exercises (kegels).⁶ These involve contracting and relaxing the muscles of the pelvic floor several times daily. They can help you become more mindful of the muscles that support and surround the vagina. Research shows improved sexual arousal and satisfaction in some groups of women who do kegels regularly. As a bonus, kegels can also help with bladder control!

SLEEP

Aim for at least 7 hours of high quality sleep nightly. Women who regularly get enough sleep report higher arousal, less vaginal dryness, more sexual activity, and better satisfaction.⁷

STRESS MANAGEMENT

Daily stressors can distract from interest and enjoyment of sexual activity. Mindfulness-based stress management techniques such as diaphragmatic breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, and yoga help many people.^{8,9}

DID YOU KNOW?

Vaginal lubrication and orgasm, in part, require healthy blood vessels.²

RELATIONSHIPS

The most important relationship you can work to cultivate is with yourself. For those in partnered relationships, intentional communication and regular affection are linked to better female sexual health.¹⁰

The well-known connection between heart health and sexual function in males appears to hold true for females too!

SUBSTANCE USE

Tobacco, cannabis and alcohol can have negative effects on female sexual health and function. Tobacco damages blood vessels, while cannabis and alcohol negatively affect orgasm due to their “depressant” effects.

Sexual problems are even more common in women with chronic diseases like high blood pressure, diabetes, metabolic syndrome, high cholesterol, and problems with mood. Healthy lifestyle practices are a win for your general health AND sexual health.

Lifestyle practices can help by supporting metabolic, cardiovascular and mental health.

Talk to your doctor if you have questions or problems related to your sexual health. They may be able to help you or refer you to other experts such as a dietitian, pelvic floor physical therapist, sex therapist, or couples counselor.