

Tips for Being Sexual

- You are a sexual person. Be proud of it, embrace it.
- Ask yourself “what makes me feel attractive, confident and sexual?” and incorporate that into your daily life.
- Sex is never really “spontaneous” – there is nothing wrong with planned dedicated time. Try to be well rested.
- Being affectionate and playful in activities outside the bedroom adds to intimacy.
- Consider new ways of being sexually intimate. Sexual intimacy and pleasure can occur without intercourse.
- Lying next to each other while making skin-to skin contact can be intimate and loving. Shared, mutually agreed upon erotica (music, literature or film) can contribute to the mood.
- Be creative in ways that suit you and your partner. Other parts of your body are receptive to sexual touch and can be equally erogenous as your genitals. Sensate focus exercises can help you explore this.
- Caresses with your hands, lips or tongue can be very pleasurable. Orgasms can occur from hand caressing or oral sex for both partners.
- Vibrators, sex toys, sexual aids (such as positioning pillows) and personal lubricants can enhance pleasure and/or sensation for both partners. You can buy them from pharmacies, local love shops and websites.

How to Talk About Sexual Topics with a Partner

Take a deep breath...you can do this. It’s not easy to talk about sexual concerns, but sharing your feelings and needs will make it easier for the both of you. Even for a couple that has been together a long time, staying sexually connected can be a challenge once there are changes in sexual health. It may be comforting to learn that there are ways to approach the topic of sex between partners in order to re-establish or continue their sexual intimacy. While it’s difficult, try to talk openly and honestly with your partner.

*“Pleasure is the authentic, abiding satisfaction that makes us feel like complete human beings.”
-Virginia Johnson*

Communication is the Key

Be Open...

Tell your partner how you feel about your sexual life and what you would like to change. Talk about your concerns, your beliefs about why your sex life is the way it is, your feelings, and what would make you feel better. Sometimes writing down your thoughts first can make it clearer and easier to discuss.

Be Positive...

Your thoughts can affect your attitude, which in turn can affect your behaviors and communication with your partner. Approaching concerns about sexual interactions openly and using “I” statements avoids blame, stays positive, and gives your partner a better sense of how you are feeling. For example: "I know it's tough to talk about, but I think we should discuss our sex life. I miss being close to you. I worry that my cancer treatment might be a problem. Can you tell me how you feel?"

Try to be open minded as you listen to your partner's point of view:

- Listen and focus on your partner's comments, not on what you plan to say in response.
- Repeat what he or she says in your own words so the partner can confirm you understand correctly.
- Ask questions to clarify your partner's concerns rather than make assumptions.
- Acknowledge that your partner's views matter to you. For example, saying things like "I see why you might think that" or "I never thought of it that way before", makes your partner feel heard.

The intention to be sexual and communicating this with your partner can go a long way. Dedicate some time to connect and enjoy each other's presence.

