**Medications That Can Affect Sexual Function in Men and Women**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Medication Class/Examples** | **Possible Adverse Sexual Effects** |
| **Thiazide diuretics** are used to treat high blood pressure (e.g., hydrochlorothiazide, or HCTZ, and chlorthalidone). | Difficulty developing or maintaining an erection (erectile dysfunction) |
| **Spironolactone** is used to treat high blood pressure and heart failure. | * Decreased sex drive and interest (men and women) * Breast enlargement in men (gynecomastia) * Erectile dysfunction * Decreased vaginal lubrication |
| **Agents that act on the brain (central nervous system or CNS)** include alcohol1, methyldopa, clonidine, reserpine (blood pressure medications); barbiturates; muscle relaxants like Flexeril, Skelaxin, Soma, Robaxin or methocarbamol; narcotic pain medications like Percocet (oxycodone), Lortab, Norco (hydrocodone), codeine or tramadol; anti-anxiety medications and sleep aids like Valium (diazepam), Ativan (lorazepam) and Ambien (zolpidem). | * Decreased sex drive and interest (men and women) * Erectile dysfunction |
| **Peripheral (as opposed to central, brain-acting) blood pressure medications, classified as “α-adrenergic blockers”** are used to treat high blood pressure, or enlarged prostate symptoms in men (e.g., prazosin and terazosin). | “Dry” (retrograde) ejaculation |
| **“Beta blockers”** are used to treat high blood pressure, heart failure, migraine prevention and a variety of other medical conditions (e.g., Coreg, or carvedilol; propranolol; atenolol; Toprol, or metoprolol2). | * Decreased sex drive and interest (men and women) * Erectile dysfunction |
| **Combined α- and β-adrenergic blockers (labetalol)** | Inhibited ejaculation |
| **“First generation” anti-depressants** are sometimes used to treat depression but are more commonly used currently to treat conditions like chronic pain, diabetic nerve pain and migraine prevention (e.g., amitriptyline, amoxapine, desipramine, doxepin, imipramine and nortriptyline). | * Inhibited ejaculation * Erectile dysfunction |
| **Trazodone** is used to treat depression and insomnia. | Priapism (a sustained erection lasting greater than several hours) is a rare but serious side effect of these medications. Priaprism is a true medical emergency that can cause permanent damage to the penis if not immediately treated. |
| **PDE-5 inhibitors** are used to treat ED, such as Viagra, Levitra and Cialis. | Priapism (see above) |
| **Monoamine oxidase inhibitors or MAOIs** are used to treat depression and related conditions (e.g., isocarboxazid, phenelzine and tranylcypromine – note: these medications are not commonly prescribed). | Inhibited ejaculation |
| **Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors or SSRIs** are widely prescribed for depression, anxiety disorders and related conditions (e.g., Zoloft, or sertraline; Celexa, or citalopram; Prozac, or fluoxetine; and Lexapro, or escitalopram). | * May decrease sex drive and interest * Anorgasmia or difficulty or inability to achieve sexual climax or orgasm (affects both men and women) |
| **First-generation antipsychotics** are used to treat schizophrenia and related mental illness (e.g., Haldol, or haloperidol; fluphenazine, chlorpromazine and thioridazine). | Inhibited ejaculation |
| **Anti-mania medications** are used to treat bipolar disorder and related mental health conditions (e.g., lithium carbonate). | Possible erectile dysfunction |
| **Cimetidine** is an acid-reducing medication used to treat heartburn, acid reflux or “GERD,” or peptic ulcers. It is available “over the counter” and by prescription. | * Decreased sex drive and interest (men and women) * Erectile dysfunction * Gynecomastia in men (uncommon but has been reported) |
| **Nicotine** is the main addictive chemical agent in tobacco and is also used for tobacco cessation in patch, gum or lozenge forms. | Reduced blood flow to penis, which may result in erectile dysfunction |

1. Excess alcohol use, which many people do not think of as a “drug,” is one of the more common causes of sexual dysfunction. In addition to causing sexual dysfunction on its own, alcohol has additive negative effects on sexual function when taken in combination with the other agents listed above.
2. Beta blockers are also commonly used in eye-drop form to treat glaucoma. It is possible to absorb enough from eye drops to affect other body systems.