



## **INHIBITED SEXUAL DESIRE**

### **WHAT IS INHIBITED SEXUAL DESIRE?**

Also called hypoactive sexual desire, sexual apathy, sexual aversion, and loss of libido. A lack of interest or aversion to sex that may have either physical or emotional causes.

### **WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF INHIBITED SEXUAL DESIRE?**

People with inhibited sexual desire exhibit a low level of desire that may be directed toward a specific person, or a general lack of interest. The extreme is a person who finds sex disgusting and repulsive.

### **WHAT CAUSES INHIBITED SEXUAL DESIRE?**

Most inhibited sexual desire is based on relationship problems, either emotional distance from the partner caused by communication problems, lack of affection, or simply not enough time alone together. The stresses of daily living such as demanding work, family, and financial stress can create a lack of desire. More severe cases of sexual aversion may be the result of an abusive childhood, restrictive upbringing, or a traumatic event such as rape. Physical illness and certain drugs can cause inhibited sexual desire, as well as hormone deficiencies, insomnia, fatigue, depression, excessive stress, or general malaise.

### **HOW IS INHIBITED SEXUAL DESIRE DIAGNOSED?**

Testosterone levels should be checked in both men and women. A lack of testosterone is a very uncommon cause of inhibited sexual desire. If no physical cause can be determined, family or marital counseling may be helpful.

### **HOW IS INHIBITED SEXUAL DESIRE TREATED?**

Treatment of inhibited sexual desire is based on individual circumstances. Family or marital counseling may enhance the relationship. Communication skills can be taught that will improve the relationship in more ways than just sexual. A counselor may teach relaxation techniques, as well as ways to discover what provides pleasure. Support groups allow couples to talk about their problems and discover that they aren't alone, which may be a comfort. There are also a number of good books with useful tips to help you discuss sexual problems with your partner.

**SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS:**

Inhibited sexual desire that remains unaddressed can result in feelings of rejection and ensuing alienation. Professional help can sometimes resolve the causes of inhibited sexual desire. Any woman who is concerned about this should not hesitate to raise the issue with her health care provider.

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