



PAINFUL INTERCOURSE

WHAT IS PAINFUL INTERCOURSE?

Painful intercourse is also known as dyspareunia. The pain may occur during entry into the vagina, during deep thrusting, or after intercourse. The pain can be on the surface or deep, along the middle of the pelvis or on one or both sides.

WHAT CAUSES IT?

Causes of painful intercourse range from simple problems that are easy to treat, to more complex problems that may require extensive testing and treatment. One of the most common causes of painful intercourse is lack of adequate lubrication. Lack of lubrication can be a result of medication, illness, lack of arousal, lack of estrogen, infection, cysts or tumors, or endometriosis. Another common cause of painful intercourse is vaginal infection or irritation. Yeast infections, trichomonas vaginitis, and bacterial vaginosis associated with vaginal inflammation may all accompany pain with intercourse. Certain douches, spermicides, and condoms have agents that are irritating and result in inflammation with associated painful intercourse. Vaginismus, a spasm of pubic muscles and lower vagina, can cause pain during intercourse. Vaginismus may be present only during intercourse and in some women the pain may be so great that they cannot even have a gynecologic exam. Medical causes of vaginismus include scars from vaginal injury, childbirth, surgery, or pelvic infections.

HOW IS PAINFUL INTERCOURSE TREATED?

Painful intercourse can be remedied by longer foreplay prior to intercourse, or by using lubricating agents such as K-Y Jelly or Astroglide.

Women who experience pain on deep penetration during intercourse may have a pelvic infection, pelvic mass, endometriosis, or bowel problems. If you have pain with deep penetration you should see your physician for further evaluation.

Finally, some women experience dyspareunia due to psychological factors. Factors leading to the pain may include prior unpleasant sexual experiences and/or prior sexual abuse. Relationship difficulties may also lead to pain with intercourse. These conditions can be treated by professional counseling.

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