

sextalk.

answers to your questions about sex and relationships

factoid 91% of UA students believe one should not drink to an intoxicating level that interferes with academic work or other responsibilities. (2004 Health & Wellness Survey, n=1434)

Q. For the past few weeks, my penis hasn't been very sexually sensitive. I still get normal erections (although the head doesn't really "plump up" like it used to) and have the same sex drive, and can even have orgasms, but none of it feels as great as it used to. The part of the skin near the tip, normally the most sensitive part, doesn't arouse me at all when it's touched now. I'm not on any medications, I'm uncircumcised, and I'm a virgin. What's up with this?

A. There are many factors that can interfere with an individual's sexual pleasure, desire and/or response. Some are physiological, some are psychological, and others are a result of what we put into our bodies. Since you are not on any type of medication (and presumably not abusing alcohol or drugs), let's focus on the first two categories.

Given the recent and rather sudden decrease in your sexual sensitivity, you should schedule an appointment for a complete physical evaluation. Your health care provider will be able to rule out any physical health conditions that might be contributing to this problem. Fatigue can also put a damper on sexual pleasure. As you approach end-of-semester final exams and the holiday season, the extra demands on your activity and concentration levels combined with less sleep may lead to physical exhaustion. This will naturally impede your body's ability to respond to sexual pleasure.

Psychological conditions that frequently cause decreased sexual pleasure include stress, depression and anxiety. Take stock of what else is happening in your life. Are you experiencing any negative changes in personal relationships? Are you going through some significant life changes or stressful circumstances? Loss of interest in activities that used to be enjoyable – including sex – is often an indicator of depression. Other symptoms of depression include: difficulty concentrating or making decisions, sleep problems, irritability or frustration, feelings of worthlessness or hopelessness, or thoughts of death or suicide.

If you think you're suffering from depression or anxiety, it's important to seek help from a mental health counselor. Campus Health's Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS) has an excellent staff who are available to talk with students about all kinds of issues. Call 621-3334 to make an appointment.

Have a question? Send it to sextalk@email.arizona.edu

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