

Prescription Drug Treatment for Female Sexual Dysfunction

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Professional and public interest in female sexual dysfunction has recently been sparked by developments in several areas including the investigation of new drug treatments. Approximately 43 percent of American women suffer from sexual dysfunction--perhaps an actual number as high as 50 million American women. The highest proportion occurs in young women between the ages of 18 and 29. (Study by Edward O. Laumann, PhD; Anthony Paik, MA; Raymond C. Rosen, PhD published in JAMA 2/9/99.) The lack of desire appears to be the number one, most significant complaint, followed by arousal and lubrication dysfunctions.

Twenty-one percent of those surveyed experienced physical pain during sex, while 27 percent reported that intercourse was not enjoyable. Sixteen percent admitted to sexual anxiety. The prevalence of female sexual dysfunction continues to be documented and the topic has generated discussions in both the medical and lay communities (60 Minutes, Larry King, Newsweek, Oprah).

Male sexual dysfunction has received the lion's share of interest, but women's complaints have been virtually ignored. Thankfully, that trend seems to be changing. With the advent of Viagra, the JAMA report and women's demands, drug companies are investigating drug treatments for women with sexual dysfunction. We know that there will not be a magic pill to cure sexual dysfunction, but we do have hope for the future. While clinical investigations take time, we anticipate the study of female sexual dysfunction will advance so all women can benefit from treatment.

The latest drugs that show promise in treating female sexual dysfunction problems are listed in our comprehensive table by

- name
- drug manufacturer
- key ingredient
- current or potential use
- clinical trial status

Some treatments are available now by prescription; others are still in clinical trial phases. If you suffer from female sexual dysfunction, see your doctor. You may want to bring a copy of this chart to show your doctor that there are courses of treatment available. The drugs listed as "available by prescription only" must be obtained through your doctor. We will continue to update this chart as new treatments become available.

Drug/Product

Manufacturer

Key Ingredient

Use/Potential Use

Status

Androsorb (cream)

Novavax

Testosterone

Hormone-booster for hypogonadal men, but may heighten libido in postmenopausal women

Phase II clinical trials

Alista

Vivus

Prostaglandin E1

New product. Increased blood flow to genitalia

Phase II clinical trials

EROS-CTD(clitoral therapy device)

Urometrics

Clitoral therapy device

FDA approved. Increases sensation and blood flow to clitoris via gentle suction

Available with doctor's prescription

Estrace cream

Warner Chilcott

Estrogen

Hormone Replacement therapy (HRT) May help vaginal dryness and discomfort; not for use in women with history of blood clots or breast or endometrial cancer.

Available with doctor's prescription

Estratest (pill)

Solvay Pharmaceuticals

Estrogen-testosterone combination

Hormone replacement therapy (HRT) to treat hot flashes.
Heightens libido in some women; possible side effects include acne and hair growth

Available with doctor's prescription

Evista

Eli Lilly

Selective estrogen receptor modulator (SERM)

Osteoporosis HRT, thickens vaginal walls

Available with doctor's prescription

Femprox (cream)

NexMed, Inc.

Blood vessel dilator

Improves blood flow to genitals; enhances arousal.

Phase II clinical trials

Intrinsa (patch)

Proctor & Gamble/Watson Laboratories

Testosterone

In six-month study women reported increased sexual activity and pleasure

Phase II clinical trials

Livial (pill)

Organon

Selective estrogen receptor modulator (SERM)

Osteoporosis, libido and arousal treatment and prevention of osteoporosis and reduction in the incidence of breast cancer

Phase III clinical trials

NM1-870 (pill)

NitroMed

African tree bark fortified with nitric oxide

Increases vaginal blood flow in postmenopausal women; may enhance arousal

Phase II clinical trials

Premarin (pill, cream or injection) Prempro (pill) Premphase (pill)

Wyeth

Estrogen

Osteoporosis, menopause symptoms. Helps vaginal dryness and discomfort associated with menopause; not for use in women with history of blood clots or breast or endometrial cancer. Prempro and Premphase not for women with hysterectomy

Available with doctor's prescription

Sterylnorleucine VIP (cream)

Senetek PLC

Synthetic version of brain chemical

Helps vaginal dryness and discomfort associated with menopause; not for use in women with history of blood clots or breast or endometrial cancer

In clinical trials

Testosterone creams

Off-label prescriptions from compounding pharmacies

Testosterone

Male hormone replacement therapy

Not FDA approved for use in women; side effects include weight gain, hair growth, oily skin or enlarged clitoris

Tostrelle (gel)

Cellegy

Testosterone

Controlled delivery system for testosterone to minimize side effects

Advanced Phase II/III clinical trials

Vasofem (tablet)

Zonagen

Blood vessel dilator

Increases blood flow to clitoris

Phase II clinical trials

Viagra

Pfizer

Blood vessel dilator

Male erectile dysfunction

Increases blood flow to genitals Off-label prescription available.

Some information in researching this was obtained from "RX: Desire" by Stephen Rae, Modern Maturity Magazine March/April 2001.

Additional resources on female sexuality are available from MayoClinic.com:

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/kegel-exercises/WO00119>

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/sexual-health/HA00035>

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/womens-health/WO00110>

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/sexual-health/HQ01363>

