

# Premature Ejaculation

## *What You Should Know*



### What is Premature Ejaculation?

Premature ejaculation (PE) is when ejaculation happens sooner than a man or his partner would like during sex, within a defined period of time, usually less than 2 to 3 minutes. PE might not be a cause for worry. But, PE can be frustrating if it makes sex less enjoyable and impacts relationships. If it happens often and causes problems, your doctor can help.

### How Does Ejaculation Work?

Ejaculation is the sudden, pleasing release of semen through the penis. It is controlled by your brain (your central nervous system). When you are sexually stimulated, signals are sent up your spinal cord to your brain. When you reach a certain level of excitement, your brain tells your reproductive organs to “go!” This causes semen to be ejected through the penis (ejaculation).

### What Causes PE?

The exact cause of PE is not known, but there are many reasons why a man may have PE. There may be biological, chemical or emotional reasons. Some causes are:

- **Serotonin** as low amounts can shorten the time to ejaculation, and lead to PE.
- **Emotional issues**, like stress and relationship problems, can be involved with PE.
- **Ageing** is not a direct cause of PE. Yet, ED can be more common with age, which may be linked to lower serum testosterone levels.

### How is PE Treated?

Psychological therapy, behavioral therapy (sex exercises) and drugs are the main treatments for PE. You and your doctor can work together to decide the best choice for you. Many people try more than one treatment at the same time.

**Psychological therapy** is a way to work through the feelings that may lead to problems with sexual relationships. The goal of this type of therapy is to learn the source of problems and find solutions that may help PE. This type of therapy can be used as the only treatment, or it may be used along with medical or behavioral therapy.

**Behavioral therapy** uses exercises to help build tolerance to delay ejaculation. The goal is to help you train your body away from PE. Some choices are the squeeze method and the stop-start method.

- **The squeeze method** is when your penis is stimulated until you are close to ejaculation and then the penis is firmly squeezed so your erection partly goes away. The goal is to know the sensations leading to climax.
- **The Stop-Start Method** is when your penis is stimulated until just before ejaculation and then just before climax, stimulation is stopped until the urge to climax lets up. As control is regained, the penis is stimulated again. This is repeated three times with the goal to ejaculate on the fourth time. You repeat this method three times a week until you have gained more control.



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**Medical therapy.** No drugs are approved to treat PE in the U.S. Still, there are a number of drugs, numbing creams and numbing sprays to help slow ejaculations in men with PE and are used off label.

- **Drugs**, like antidepressants can have the side effect of delayed orgasms. Some doctors use these drugs “off-label” (for a different reason than the drug’s original use) to treat PE. Other types of drugs have been used to induce ejaculatory dysfunction such as retrograde ejaculations.
- **Numbing creams or sprays** may be put on the head of the penis before sex to lower sensation. They also cause vaginal numbness, so they should be washed off before sex. Condoms may also stop the drug from numbing the vagina and it protects from disease and pregnancy.

With the techniques listed here, about 95 out of 100 men will recover from PE. There is no way to promise recovery, but learning how to relax may help. If the problem stays, keep working with your doctor to find solutions.

### About Urology Care Foundation

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