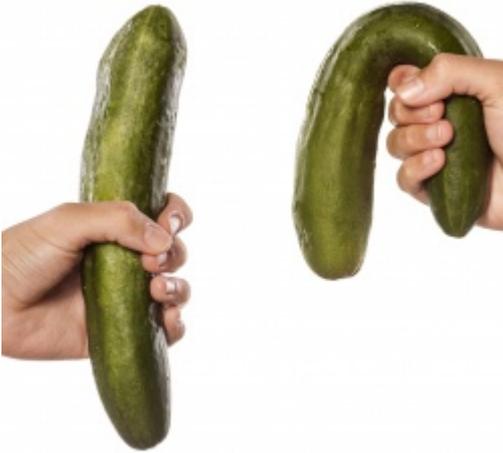


Banging out Penile Prowess



By *Jamie Wells, M.D.* — November 25, 2016



Credit: Shutterstock [1]

It isn't hard to imagine that as our enlarging and ever-stiffening polarized political spheres come to a head, an article about what maintains the penis' potency might be a kind of crowning glory.

To start, let's give you a sturdy grasp of what prompts erectile dysfunction (ED) firming up any confusion.

More than 30 million men in the United States are affected by ED to some extent, so prevalence is certainly high (1).

The mechanism to control a man's ability to get erect and maintain it is quite complex. The point and shoot components are controlled by your sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems. When there is impairment in either arena, there is a flawed rigidity or ejaculation.

When nerves are firing and blood is flowing, this pleasurable cycle effortlessly loops upon arousal between brain, bloodstream and engorging phallus. Once all systems are a go, the penis is ready for launch. Sex ensues.

When issues —fleeting or protracted— arise in this labyrinth, a man's member remains not hard enough or flaccid. Occasional occurrence typically warrants no treatment. Frequent disruption, on the other hand, can be a signal of significant underlying disease or cause.

Physical triggers that penetrate the often elaborate landscape of ED include cardiovascular and inflammatory etiologies like high blood pressure, coronary artery disease, peripheral vascular disease, Lupus, Rheumatoid Arthritis and even medication use as antihypertensive and antidepressant drugs are common culprits. The presentation of ED can readily be the first sign of conditions that necessitate medical intervention.

Anything compromising or damaging nerves and blood vessels can swiftly pump the air out of this viable and purposeful organ. Poorly controlled diabetes. Stroke. Narrowed or blocked arteries. Hormone imbalances. Prior injury to high real estate locales (e.g. spinal cord, pelvis) or post-surgical complications. Growing prostate. Tobacco, alcohol and drug use—prescription and otherwise.

Stress, anxiety and psychological factors can certainly influence ED and play a meaningful role. The contributing parties can be multifactorial in origin, ambiguous and even uncertain.

The key take home message is when it does enter your bedroom investigating the inciting measure with your doctor could improve not just your very important love life but your entire health, well-being and essential longevity as well.

Recently, a group of researchers from China published a systematic review and meta-analysis of the literature on chronic periodontitis (CP, a common bacterial-induced inflammatory disease of the gums) and the risk of ED which was published in the *International Journal of Impotence Research*. (2) After their exhaustive look at work on the subject—due to exclusion criteria—the evidence of the positive association they found was based on limited studies and not enough to conclude sufficiently.

But, as [Dr. Zhigang Zhao of the First Affiliated Hospital of Guangzhou Medical University of China](#) [2] states, “It might be too early to suggest men with ED should have their teeth checked; and that men with chronic periodontitis should worry about their sexual function. However, it might be beneficial to inform patients with CP about its association with ED. Since CP has been linked with several chronic disorders, it is sensible to recommend daily inter-cleaning to reduce dental plaque and gingival inflammation. CP treatment can control or eliminate inflammation and may reduce the risk of ED.”

Because similar risk factors can trigger ED and CP—like smoking, aging, coronary artery disease and diabetes, to name a few—it is difficult to assess the nature of the link. As this researcher suggests, it is definitely not a bad idea to emphasize good oral hygiene, in general, as a way to minimize more significant disease.

Or, thought another way, it might be advisable to eliminate bad oral hygiene if you want to attract a partner so as to discover whether ED is even your personal reality. In the process, you are also augmenting your overall health.

SOURCE:

(1), (2) [Liu LH, Li EM, Zhong SL et al. Chronic periodontitis and the risk of erectile dysfunction: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *International Journal of Impotence Research*. \(2016\) 00, 1-6.](#)

COPYRIGHT © 1978-2016 BY THE AMERICAN COUNCIL ON SCIENCE AND HEALTH

Source URL: <https://www.acsh.org/news/2016/11/25/banging-out-penile-prowess-10485>

Links

[1] <http://www.shutterstock.com>

[2] <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-periodontitis-erectile-dysfunc-idUSKBN13K1UP>

[3] <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/27829669>