

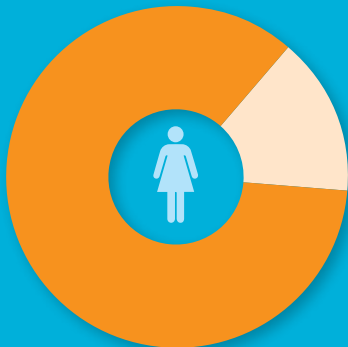


# Interventions to Address Sexual Problems in People with Cancer

» It is vital that members of the healthcare team initiate a conversation about sexual health with cancer patients. This is the first essential step that should be taken by healthcare providers so further support can be given.

## The Burden

Sexual dysfunction in cancer patients is a significant problem.



Up to **85%**

Of women with cancer (breast, cervical and colorectal) may experience difficulties with sexual function

Up to **95%**

Of men with cancer (prostate, testicular, colorectal and bladder) may experience sexual difficulties



## Sexual Health Related Distress



**60%**

- Up to 60% of men with cancer report distress due to sexual dysfunction

**50%**



- 50% of women are distressed by changes in sexual functioning and body image after a gynecologic cancer diagnosis
- More than 50% of women with breast cancer have distress due to sexual dysfunction



- The majority of partners of prostate cancer patients also report significant distress

# The Gap

- Half of healthcare providers believe sexual dysfunction in cancer patients is an important issue but most do not discuss the topic with their patients
- A barrier for healthcare providers in asking patients about sexual health is lack of expertise and resources to help patients

To address this gap in the healthcare community, Cancer Care Ontario and the Program in Evidence-Based Care have created a guideline called *Interventions to Address Sexual Problems in People with Cancer*.

*"I hope that by providing healthcare providers with the Interventions to Address Sexual Problems in People with Cancer clinical guideline, they will not only be better able to support the physical and emotional impact that cancer has on a patient's sexual health and well-being, but it will also begin to normalize the conversation around sexual health. I am confident that the guideline will help improve the quality of life for patients and families dealing with sexual health in the future."*

– Kathy M., Patient Family Advisor & Guideline Development Working Group member

# Recommendations

Recommendations are included in the guideline on how to improve sexual function using a variety of interventions such as drugs, counselling and devices.

It is organized by specific issues cancer patients face and may speak to their healthcare provider about, including:

- sexual response (desire, arousal, orgasm)
- body image
- intimacy/relationships
- overall satisfaction/overall function
- vasomotor symptoms
- genital symptoms (women)

The guideline is a practical tool to help providers make better informed decisions and recommendations in the area of sexual health and provide person-centred care for patients and their families.

» Find **The Interventions to Address Sexual Problems in People with Cancer** guideline at [www.cancercare.on.ca/psoguidelines](http://www.cancercare.on.ca/psoguidelines)



Need this information in an accessible format?

1-855-460-2647, TTY (416) 217-1815  
publicaffairs@cancercare.on.ca.