Enjoying Sex When You Have OAB

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Overactive Bladder and Enjoying Sex

Both men and women with overactive bladder (OAB) have troubles enjoying sex. Luckily, there are a few things that can be done to better enjoy sex and intimacy with your partner.

How OAB Affects Sexual Life

A 2007 study featured in “The Journal of medicine “confirmed that OAB (with or without incontinence) has a significant impact on women’s sexual health, especially reducing the sexual desire and the ability to achieve an orgasm. Furthermore, women complained about having pain during intercourse, the need to interrupt sexual activity to void. Achieving orgasm was more difficult because of pain, fear of incontinence and anxiety related to sex.

Another research paper published in the same journal in 2008 assessed the impact of OAB and other urinary symptoms on sexual health in men. This study concluded that these conditions are associated with an increased prevalence of erectile dysfunction, reduced sexual activity and sexual enjoyment.

Tips for Better Sex

1. **It is perfectly fine to enjoy sex.** Many women feel that sex should be avoided because it may aggravate OAB, since they experience more symptoms during sexual intercourse. However, you should now that the bladder is not affected by sexual intercourse, and there is no danger to damage the bladder, unless OAB is associated with prolapsed bladder.
2. **Talk to your partner about your concerns.** You may feel this topic is embarrassing and avoid a discussion with your partner. Don’t hide your feeling and emotions about your condition because your partner may think you are not attracted to him/her anymore. It is not good for you either because it can affect your self esteem and self-confidence.

3. **Find solutions.** Firstly you should talk to the doctor and find the best treatment to manage your condition. Secondly, work with your partner. You may need a towel around, in case you experience urine leakage during sex or orgasm. You both should be ok to take breaks, in case you need to take a trip to the washroom. Try to limit the consumption of the water or other beverages before you plan to have sex, since accidents are more likely to happen if the bladder is full. Alcoholic beverages cause dehydration and make your take more trips to the washroom. In addition, alcohol influences the brain signals that go to and control the bladder about when to release the urine.
4. **Watch your diet.** Keep your weight in check, because extra pounds can cause more leaks because there will be more pressure on the bladder and urethra. Foods like chocolate, citric fruits and pineapple, tomatoes, onion, spices, sugar and artificial sweeteners, aged cheese and sour cream, artificial additives from processed foods can make urine leakage more likely to happen. Keep a food journal, notice which foods are causing more symptoms and avoid them (or find alternatives).

5. **Stay active.** Exercise regularly not only your pelvic floor (with Kegel exercises), but your entire body. The stronger are your muscles, the better you will control the OAB. In addition, exercise can also decrease your stress levels and put you in a better mood, so you can enjoy sex more.

Resources

NCBI (Overactive bladder is associated with erectile dysfunction and reduced sexual quality of life in men)

NCBI (Overactive Bladder and Women's Sexual Health: What's the impact?)

WebMD (How OAB Affects Sex and Intimacy)

WebMD (Urinary Incontinence Slideshow: Foods and Drinks That Make You Gotta Go)