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Can erections happen when you're not sexually aroused? ^[1]

Dear Alice,

Can you be erect and not horny?

Answer

Dear Reader,

Just because you pitch a tent doesn't mean you're ready to go camping. In other words, yes — men can have erections without feeling sexually excited or horny. These erections, aka spontaneous erections, are perfectly normal and common, popping up when guys are eating dinner, are called on in class, riding a bike, watching a movie, reading, sleeping, talking with grandma, or doing just about anything else. The majority of the time they will go away on their own, usually within a few minutes.

Sometimes the feel of a new pair of underwear or a deep sense of relaxation can cause an erection, but more often than not, hormones are at the root of unexpected hard-ons. When boys go through puberty, hormones surge in their bodies and cause erections that are not under their control; these spontaneous erections decrease in frequency as guys age.

Likewise, it is also possible for men to desire sexual contact and not have erections. Both situations are perfectly natural and may occur thorough out the lifecycle. There are many factors that influence both erections and sexual desire. Many men will discover a pattern over time; though don't worry if you can't find commonality in your situations. The hormonal influence causing spontaneous erections can make it difficult for to see patterns.

It's also perfectly normal and common for teenage and adult men to wake up in the morning with erections (sometimes called morning wood), regardless of whether they've been dreaming about hot, steamy sex or boring homework or household chores. Men usually have several erections each night as part of a normal sleep cycle, during REM sleep. The penis often remains hard when the alarm buzzes, making it difficult to urinate until the erection goes away.

Alice!

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