

Men's sex drive and age ^[1]

Dear Alice,

Does a man's sexual drive start to decrease at a certain age?

— Reaching 30

Answer

Dear Reaching 30,

Do all good things come to an end? Not necessarily. For both women and men, sexual desire or drive decreases gradually with age. However, testosterone, the hormone which primarily controls sexual drive in men, never stops being produced entirely. Some men in their 70s and 80s have an active libido even with decreased testosterone levels. Beyond aging, some reasons why libido may be affected for temporary periods of time at any point in the life cycle include stress, fatigue, preoccupation with work, side effects of medications, medical conditions, dissatisfaction with a relationship, and lack of desire for a partner, among others.

A man's sexual life changes with age even as the desire may be maintained. In their 20s, men are less likely to experience wet dreams and some report that they masturbate less often. Some men in their late 20s and 30s notice that their penises aren't as erect as they once were, and that they may require direct stimulation to get hard. Around ages 40 to 50, a man may require direct stimulation to get an erection, and his erection may not be as full or firm as before. He may find it easier for his penis to lose its hardness, and, once lost, more difficult to regain. Men's angle of erection may change — a penis that once pointed up may now just stick straight out; one that once pointed straight out may now still be stiff but point slightly down. The force of ejaculation may be less, as is the amount ejaculated. As men reach their 50s through 70s, physical and mental arousal become much more critical to erection. It may take longer to ejaculate, and some men find that they don't need to ejaculate every time.

What's good to remember is that these changes are normal bodily aging processes and that they don't happen all at once. Also, every person has an experience that is her/his own. How people remain sexual usually changes with age, just as sexual experiences of a teenager may not resemble sexual practices of a late 20s adult. Many people adopt different sexual practices, like

masturbation if going solo and more mutual petting, sucking, and rubbing with partners, as they age. As long as you can talk and think sexually, you may experience pleasure no matter what happens with your genitals. Staying sexually active doesn't always require having penetrative sex, ejaculation, or even a partner.

On a related vein, with the invention and widespread use of male and female prescriptions, some individuals may prolong their sexual prowess indefinitely. As with all prescription medications, people considering their use are recommended to consult with a health care provider to determine its proper usage and if they are the right course of action for you.

Though aging may bring about some changes, you *never* lose their capacity for giving and receiving pleasure!

Alice!

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