



# Great Lakes VA HEALTHVIEWS

*The Newsletter about Health for Veterans in VISN 12*



Volume 9, Issue 2

Summer 2011



The summer months are upon us, which makes it a good time to talk about skin cancer. Skin cancer can affect everyone, and it can be VERY serious.

**Basal Cell** is the most common type of cancer involving the skin. This type is most often seen on the face, neck, ears, arms, hands, or trunk. It can appear waxy, pearly, scaly, or scar-like.

**Melanoma** is the most dangerous type of skin cancer. Melanoma can be found anywhere on the body. The edges of melanoma are frequently poorly defined and different from one side to the other.

**Squamous Cell** is another common skin cancer. It forms on the face, lips, ears, neck, arms, and hands most often. This cancer appears as firm red bumps, or flat, scaly, crusty growths.

Anyone can get skin cancer, but those at greatest risk for developing skin cancer are people with:

- Fair skin, light colored hair, or light colored eyes
- A lot of moles on their skin
- A history of sunburn from natural sunlight or tanning beds
- A family history of skin cancer
- Past exposure to radiation or chemicals
- A weakened immune system

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The American Association of Dermatology recommends the following guidelines to help prevent skin cancer:

- Use sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15 with protection for both UVA and UVB rays. There are many different brands of sunscreen so if one irritates your skin try another brand.



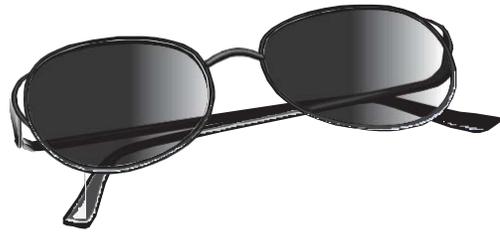
- Reapply sunscreen every 3 to 5 hours when outdoors in the sun. If you are actively sweating, or in water, sunscreen will need to be reapplied more often.

- Wear clothing that covers your skin, including sleeves, long pants, and a wide brimmed hat that shields your ears, face and neck.

- When possible stay in the shade. Avoid the sun between the hours of 10 am and 4 pm when it is strongest.



- Wear sunglasses to protect your eyes.



- Avoid tanning beds; these cause the same damage to your skin as direct sunlight.

Check your skin often. See your health care provider if you notice any changes in moles, suspicious or concerning spots, or rashes that will not go away. You may be referred to a dermatologist, a doctor who specializes in skin. If caught early, many skin cancers can be treated successfully.

Summer is a time when everyone should go outside and enjoy good weather and healthy exercise. If you follow the guidelines above, you can protect your skin from harmful rays and still enjoy the great outdoors!

Sources:  
<https://www.kramesondemand.com>  
<http://www.aad.org>

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Submitted by:  
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## The Women's View

# Problems with Sexual Function

Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus (Gray, 1992). Is this famous book title familiar to you? There is a follow-up book by the same author, Mars and Venus in the Bedroom (Gray, 1995), which explains the different ways that men and women experience sex.

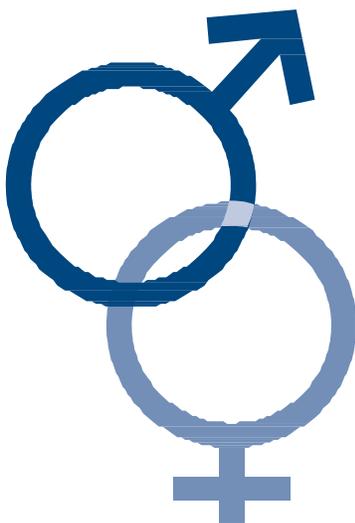
**The stages of sex are the same for both men and women. They are:**

**Arousal** – this first stage involves an interest in sex, combined with a physical sensation of desire.

An erection is usually a sign of arousal in men. Men usually have issues with arousal due to aging and health problems.

Lubrication, and increased blood to the vagina and clitoris, are signs of arousal for women. This stage is more likely to be a problem for women than men.

Emotional trauma, cycle changes, and relationship issues can affect arousal for women at any age. Stress and tiredness can also have a negative influence on sexual interest for women.



**Plateau** – this stage brings the increasingly pleasant physical feelings that a person has during sex.

This stage can be affected by the same issues that cause problems in arousal. Pain can also have a negative effect on pleasure. A woman can feel pain due to muscle tightening related to fear. Cycle changes from diseases like fibroid tumors can also make sex painful for some

women. Sores on the outside of the body from things like infections can cause discomfort. Some women have pain due to problems with lubrication.

**Orgasm** – this is the height of pleasure and the point where release, combined with physical climax, occurs.

This stage is not likely to happen unless the plateau phase is positive. It is more common for women to have a problem achieving orgasm and there is no pill yet to help.

**Recovery** – is after climax, when the person is relaxed and usually can't become aroused again. The entire cycle may start as soon as recovery is

complete, but the length of time for that to occur is different for each person and situation.

Although the stages are the same, there are differences in sexual function between men and women.

Women bear children, have cycles, and have extreme hormone changes over the length of their lives. They care deeply about their many social roles and bring their feelings into every part of their lives, including sex. Improving sexual function for women often starts with improving their overall health and relationships. If

you are experiencing problems with sexual function, talk to your Primary Care Provider about the changes you can make and what kind of help the VA can provide.

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Submitted by:  
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Psychiatrist, Women Veteran's Health Program  
Jesse Brown VAMC

#### References

Gray, J. (1992). *Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.

Gray, J. (1995). *Mars and Venus in the Bedroom*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.



## Healthy Living Message

[http://www.prevention.va.gov/eat\\_wisely.asp](http://www.prevention.va.gov/eat_wisely.asp)

### Eat Wisely to Maximize Your Health!

Eat a variety of foods including vegetables, fruits, and whole grains.

It is important to include fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products in your diet, and limit total salt, fat, sugar, and alcohol.



*Sponsored by your Health Promotion/Disease Prevention Program*

# Eat your Fruits and Vegetables



One of the joys of summer is the abundance of fresh produce! Summer is the perfect time of year to incorporate fresh fruit and vegetables to our daily diet, backyard barbeques, and national celebrations!

‘In-season’ fruits and vegetables will be available at your local grocer or farmer’s market throughout the summer. In the Midwest these fruits and vegetables are considered ‘in-season’: Apples, Beets, Blackberries, Blueberries, Broccoli, Cabbage, Carrots, Chard, Cherries, Corn, Cucumbers, Eggplant, Green Beans, Green Onions, Greens, Kale, Lettuce, Melons, Mushrooms, Peaches, Peas, Sweet Peppers, Plums, Potatoes, Radishes, Raspberries, Rhubarb, Scallions, Spinach, Summer Squash, Strawberries, Tomatoes, and Zucchini.

“Cool as a cucumber” isn’t just a catchy phrase. The inner temperature of a cucumber can be up to 20 degrees cooler than the outside air. No wonder these are such a summertime favorite!



It is important to look for firm cucumbers with rich green color and no soft spots. Cucumbers that bulge in the middle may mean large watery seeds and tasteless flesh.

Blueberries, strawberries, raspberries, and blackberries signify summer and rightfully so, as the warmer months are the peak harvest for these fruits.

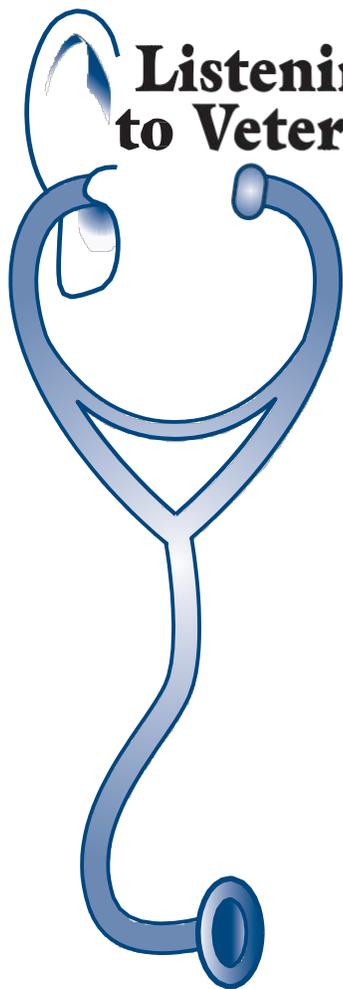
When eaten raw, most berries have from 50 to 100 calories per serving. Berries are brimming with vitamin C, potassium, and fiber. In general, berries should be dry, firm, well shaped, and eaten within a week after purchase. Stay away from containers of berries with juice stains which may be a sign that the berries are crushed and possibly moldy.

If you can’t eat them that soon, remember that berries freeze well! It’s best to buy berries that are ‘in-season’ as they’ll cost less and are more ripe and flavorful than ‘out-of-season’ berries.

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Source:  
United States Department of Agriculture-<http://www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov>



Answered by:  
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## **What are the reasons a man experiences changes in ejaculation?**

Many men report a change in their ejaculation as they age. It often occurs with urinary complaints. Most of these are usually the result of prostate growth.

One function of a man's prostate is to produce some of the fluid that is ejaculated. Another is to adjust the thickness and acidity of the fluid. Certain procedures and medicines used to treat prostate problems can cause changes in ejaculation.

Common procedures that cause changes in ejaculation:

- ✓ TURP (often called "reeming of the prostate")
- ✓ Prostate removal for cancer
- ✓ Radiation for prostate cancer

Common medicines that cause changes in ejaculation:

- ✓ Tamsulosin(Flomax)
- ✓ Terazosin(Hytrin)
- ✓ Doxasin(Cardura)
- ✓ Finasteride (Proscar)
- ✓ Dutasteride (Avodart)
- ✓ Antidepressants(Effexor, Zoloft, Prozac, Paxil)

Ejaculation problems that are side effects of medicines may be reversed if the drug is stopped or substituted. There are certain medical conditions that are often linked to ejaculation problems. They include BPH (Benign prostate hyperplasia/enlargement), Diabetes and Cystic Fibrosis. Following your treatment plan for these conditions MAY help.

When younger men have fertility problems, there are diagnostic tests that can be done.

Premature ejaculation is the most frequent reason that men seek treatment for ejaculation problems. There are effective, FDA-approved medicines and counseling services available for this common condition.

Urologists are the specialists that diagnose and treat ejaculation problems as well as other sexual conditions including erection problems and low sex drive. Your primary care provider can refer you to a VA Urologist. If you have questions, talk to your primary care provider.

References:

McVary, Roehrborn American Urological Association Guideline: Management of Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia (BPH) 2010

Jarow, Sigman The Optimal Evaluation of the Infertile Male: AUA Best Practice Statement 2010



## Enroll Now

- ★ Would you like to refill your prescriptions online?
- ★ Would you like to have 24/7 access to health and benefit information?

Contact the **My HealthVet Coordinator** at your facility or your **Primary Care Clinic** for more information.

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**Important note: We are not able to mail this newsletter to you. It can be found in waiting rooms of your VA Medical Center and outpatient clinics.**

You can also subscribe to the electronic version of this newsletter by going to the VISN 12 webpage [www.visn12.va.gov](http://www.visn12.va.gov) Click on the Newsletters link on the left side of the page.

*Your best source for information about your health will always be your health care team. We hope this newsletter will encourage you to ask questions about your health concerns.*

**Phone Numbers for VISN 12 Hospitals**

Hines:	708-202-8387
Iron Mountain:	906-774-3300
Jesse Brown:	312-569-8387
Madison:	608-256-1901
Milwaukee:	1-888-469-6614
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***"Ask An Expert" Question  
or Idea for Future Articles***

Do you have an "Ask An Expert" question or an idea for a future article? Your ideas can be e-mailed or mailed to the Senior Editor.

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VISN 12 VA Healthcare facilities are accredited by The Joint Commission. Joint Commission evaluates healthcare facilities on quality, safety of patient care and safety of the environment.

If you have any concerns about patient care or safety in your facility, first contact the person in charge. If your concern cannot be resolved, the VA encourages you to contact Joint Commission. You may request a "public information interview."

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