



# How to Talk with Your Partner

Menopause can present challenges to a healthy sex life. For some women, physical issues (such as vaginal dryness) and emotional issues can create temporary barriers to enjoying sex. But they are temporary barriers, and there are effective ways for getting past them.

One of those ways is communicating with your partner. Communication is one of the keys to a healthy sex life. Here are some ways you can keep the avenues of communication open with your partner, and help make sex more enjoyable for you both.

- **Learn how to communicate with each other.** It sounds basic, but the truth is that everyone has a different communication style—and the differences can be especially pronounced between men and women. Take time to understand the ways each of you express yourselves.
- **Deal openly and honestly with your emotions.** Sex, be it good or bad, naturally produces powerful emotions, and frustrations can pile up if these emotions aren't dealt with in a forthright manner. You're going through a period of change that can affect many aspects of your physical and emotional health. Keep your partner apprised of what's going on and how he or she can help you as you move through menopause. By the same token, realize your partner may be going through changes as well, and encourage him or her to be honest about emotions, too.
- **Use "I" statements when talking about your feelings.** Remember, you are responsible for your feelings, not your partner. When talking about what may be bothering you, keep the focus on how you are feeling, rather than what your partner may be doing to trigger those feelings.
- **Be open to your partner's feedback.** Communication and sex are two-way streets. Successfully navigating both means talking and listening.
- **Don't neglect the positive.** We all go through physical changes as we age that can faze us. But the things that keep your partner and you strong together should be accentuated. Tell your partner what you love about him or her. Encourage your partner to do the same.
- **Talk about your preferences.** Everyone has favorite positions or techniques. Don't keep them a secret from your partner.
- **Discuss options for "freshening" things up.** One enemy of good sex is boredom. Doing the same things over and over again is a sure recipe for slipping into inertia with regard to your sex life. Talk with your partner about how you can introduce some novelty into your sexual time together. It may be a new location (like a hotel room), experimenting with devices and lubricants, or trying something one or both of you have fantasized about.
- **Talk about the nonsexual, physical things you enjoy.** Some people love a massage, or the simple pleasures of hand-holding during a walk. What do you enjoy that doesn't necessarily involve sex? Let your partner know.