

Debunking 5 myths

Things men need to
know about erectile
dysfunction



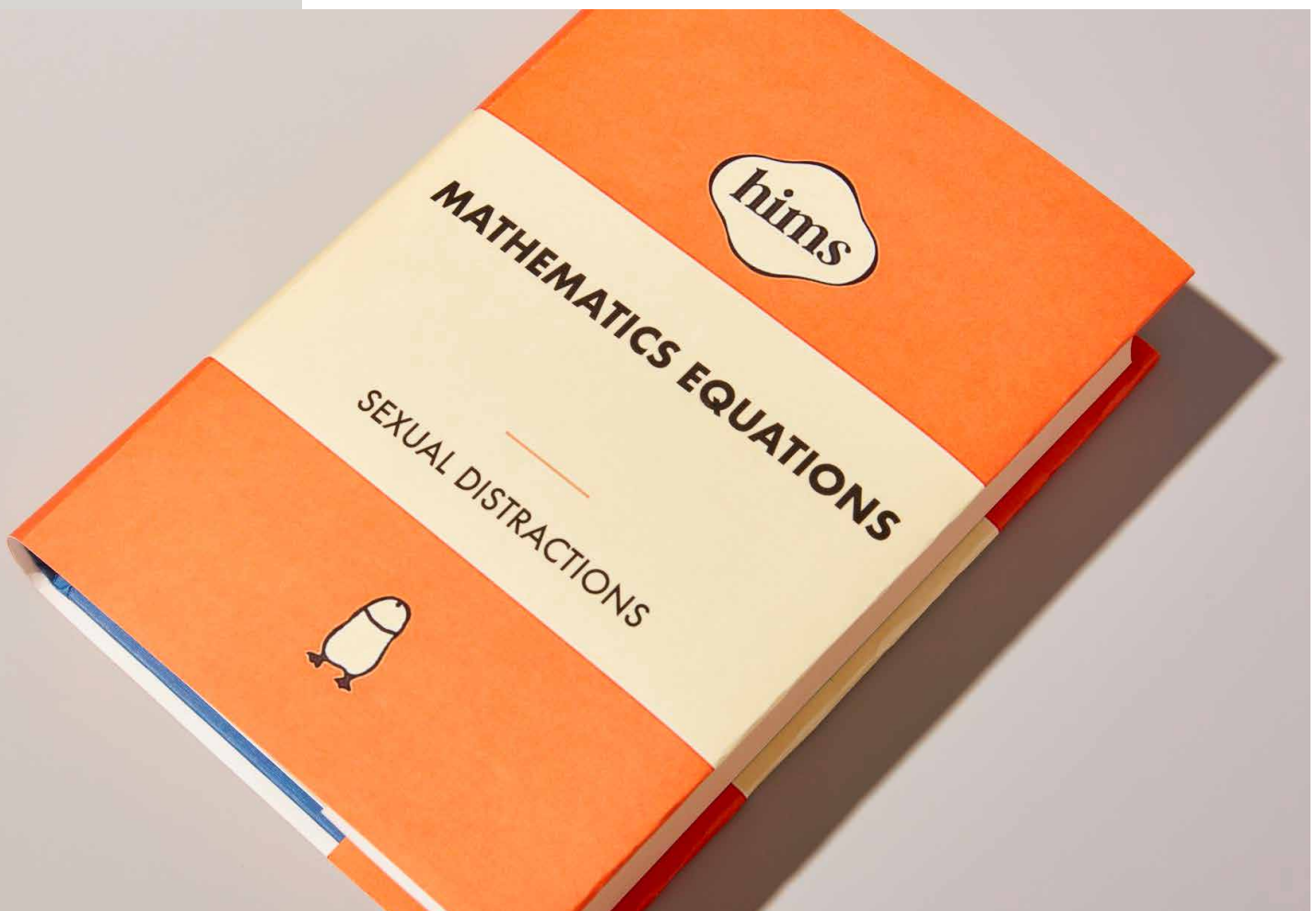
When you hear the phrase “erectile dysfunction,” you probably have a pretty good idea what it means.

Even if you’ve never been diagnosed or haven’t experienced an episode yourself, the name doesn’t leave much to the imagination. Even so, much as you may think you know about erectile dysfunction, you may be surprised by some of the facts.



Erectile dysfunction is a relatively common condition among men, and certainly nothing to be embarrassed about. Though this condition is common (especially as we age), there is a great deal of stigma against it, which prevents many of the men who suffer from it from ever seeking help.

The stigma against the disorder also contributes to the dissemination of misinformation about erectile dysfunction and its treatment.





If you have experienced some degree of erectile dysfunction in your life, you are not alone! Take heart in this fact and then start taking steps to resolve the issue. The best place to begin is learning as much as you can about the disorder so you can better understand the contributing factors and treatment options.

Start here by learning the truth behind 5 myths about erectile dysfunction.



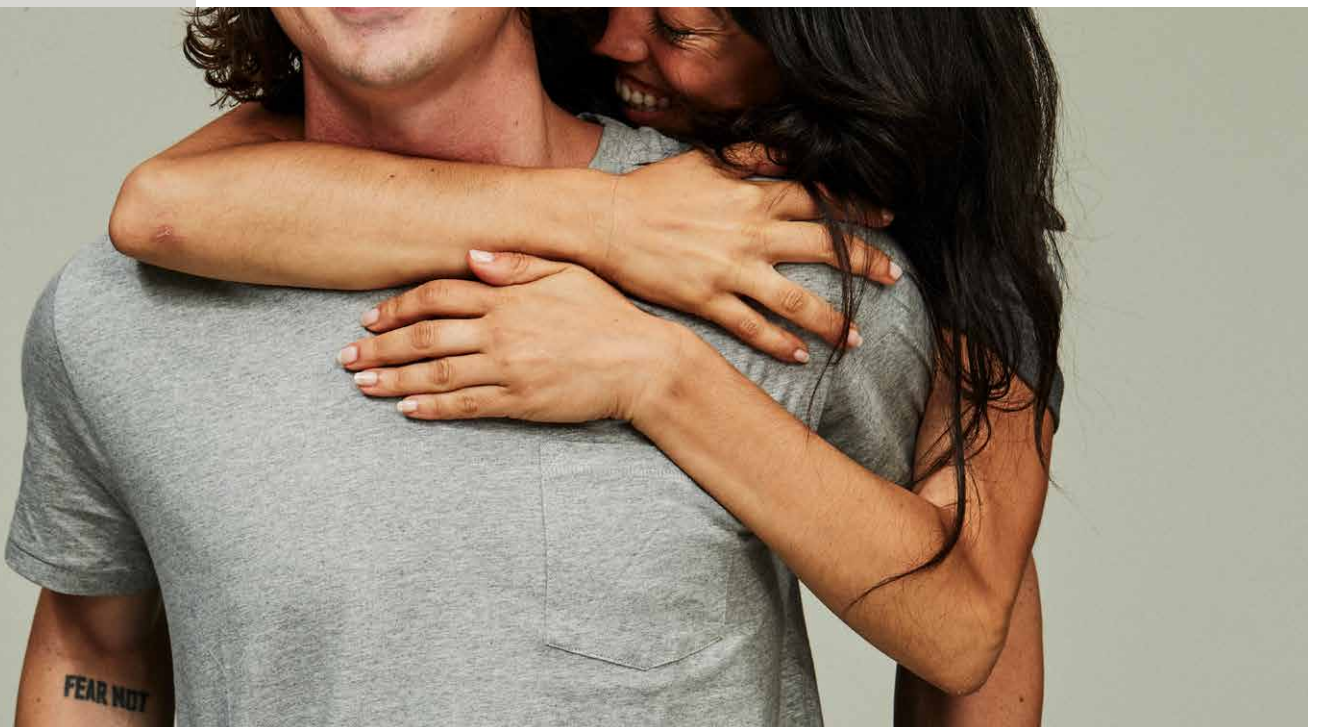
Myth #1

Erectile Dysfunction
Only Affects
Older Men

When you see adverts for erectile dysfunction, they usually feature older men—men with white hair and wrinkled skin. Though erectile dysfunction is certainly common among older men, it can affect men of any age. To give you an example, consider the results of The Massachusetts Male Aging Study:

- **The prevalence of erectile dysfunction is about 52%.**
- **At the age of 40, about 40% of men have suffered some degree of ED.**
- **By the age of 70, about 70% of men have experienced erectile issues of some kind.**

So, do you need to worry about erectile dysfunction if you are starting to get older? According to research from the Boston University school of medicine, only 1 in 10 men between ages 40 and 70 will experience severe or complete erectile dysfunction.



These statistics are promising because it means that even if you do develop erectile issues as you get older, the likelihood of complete erectile dysfunction is fairly low. You do need to consider other risk factors besides age, however. Keep reading to learn more.

Myth #2

Erectile Dysfunction is a Normal Consequence of Aging

Not only do many people assume that erectile dysfunction only affects older men, but it is also commonly assumed that ED is a normal result of aging. In reality, there are a number of risk factors for erectile dysfunction and any of them can affect men of any age. Here is a list of risk factors that have been associated with ED:

- **Obesity** – Being overweight or obese increases your risk for a variety of chronic conditions which can then increase your risk for ED. It is also important to note that obesity can affect your circulation as well which may contribute to erectile issues.





- **Smoking** – Cigarette smoking damages your body in some very significant ways. In correlation with ED, it damages the blood vessels which can impact circulation and your ability to perform sexually.
- **Medical conditions** – Many medical conditions can impact risk factors for ED such as blood pressure, circulation, hormone balance and more. Some of the diseases most often correlated with ED include type 2 diabetes and heart disease.
- **Medical treatments** – Not only can medical conditions increase your risk for ED, but so can certain medical treatments such as radiation or chemotherapy. Surgical treatments (such as prostate surgery) can also increase your risk.
- **Alcohol/Drug use** – Overuse of drugs and alcohol can negatively impact your health in many ways. In addition to dampening your mood,

it can decrease libido and make it difficult for you to achieve/maintain an erection or to achieve orgasm.

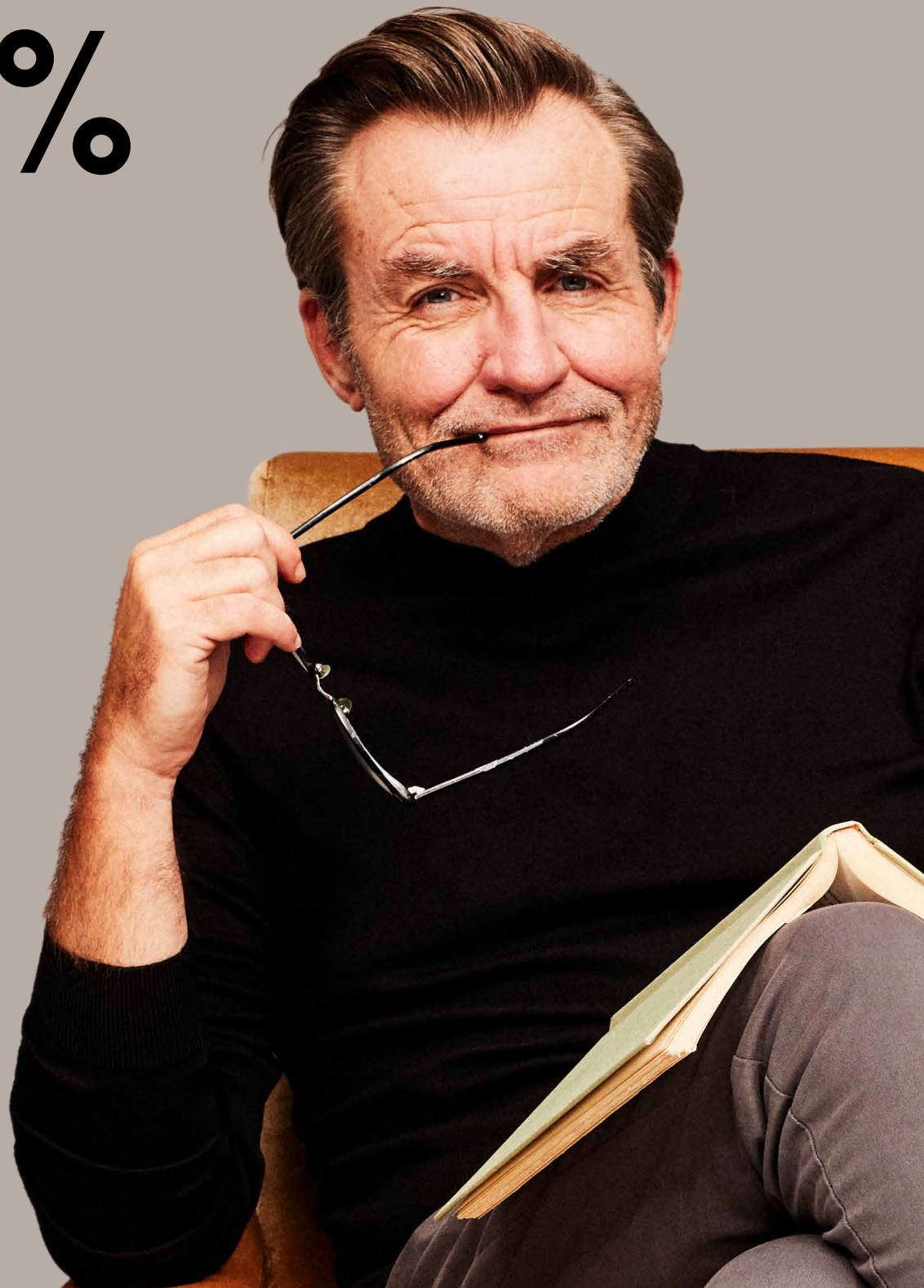
- **Psychological conditions**
 - Research confirms that psychological factors play a significant role in erectile dysfunction—conditions like anxiety, stress, and depression can increase the risk for ED. In fact, erectile dysfunction related to mental health problems has its own name—psychological impotence.
- **Hormone problems** – Hormones play an important role in regulating numerous bodily functions, including erectile function. The primary hormone at work is testosterone, though low-T is more likely to cause issues with libido and fertility than ED alone.

While it would be inaccurate to say that erectile dysfunction is an older man's problem, age is one of the biggest risk factors for the condition.



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Myth #3

Erectile Dysfunction is Not Dangerous

The correlation between poor health and ED brings us into the next myth—that ED is not dangerous. In one sense, this is true. Having erectile dysfunction isn't going to kill you. On the other hand, however, the fact that you are experiencing erectile issues could be an indication of underlying health problems.

When it comes to underlying health problems that contribute to ED, heart disease is one of the biggest concerns. Heart disease is actually a blanket term for a number of different conditions, most of which are characterized by certain cardiovascular problems such as atherosclerosis, irregular heartbeat or an anatomical defect.

Atherosclerosis is the primary concern and also the factor most closely linked to erectile dysfunction. When cholesterol and other fatty substances accumulate along artery walls, it causes the artery walls to thicken, narrowing the opening and limiting the amount of blood that can flow through.



Not only could erectile issues be a symptom related to heart disease, but they could also be correlated with type 2 diabetes.

Diabetes is a condition in which the body is unable to produce adequate insulin to control blood sugar levels or the body's response to insulin becomes impaired.

If you haven't already talked to your doctor about your erectile issues, you should make an appointment sooner rather than later. In many cases, ED is primarily psychological, so it might not be an indication that something is medically wrong with you. That is not to say, however, that psychological issues aren't just as viable as medical problems or that they don't warrant treatment. Whatever the case may be, it is always worth talking to your doctor about your concerns—it is the only way to really figure out what is going on and what you can do about it.



Myth #4

Prescription Drugs Are the Best Way to Treat ED

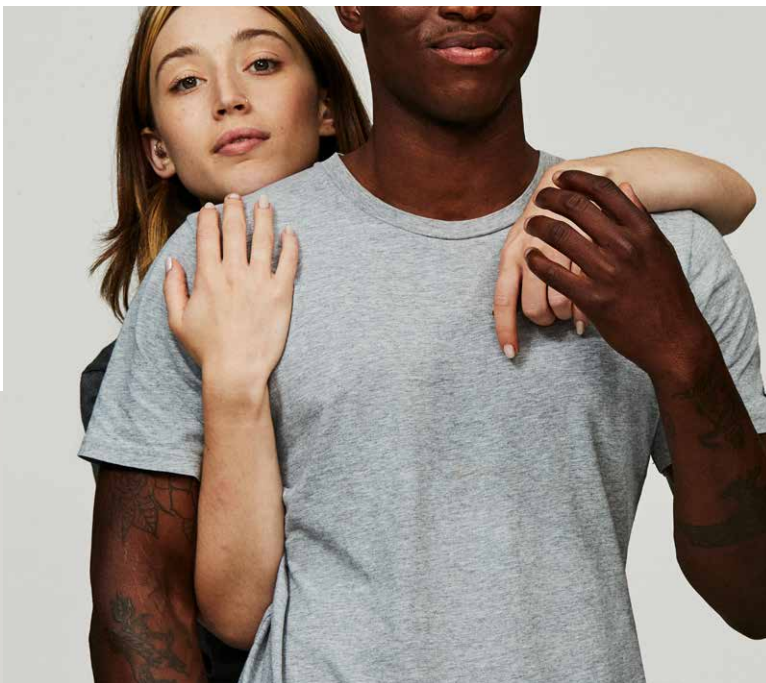
If you have never talked to your doctor about your erectile dysfunction, you might assume that the ED drugs you see advertised on television are the best or only way to treat ED. This simply isn't the case.

Erectile dysfunction drugs like Viagra (sildenafil) and Cialis (tadalafil) belong to a class of drugs called phosphodiesterase type 5 (PDE5) inhibitors. They work by increasing the nitric oxide levels in the body which then works alongside other substances to dilate the blood vessels, increasing circulation to the penis. When the penis fills with blood, the pressure traps the blood inside and results in an erection. Though these drugs work for many men, they fail to work for about 30% of men.



Though ED drugs help to produce an erection in about 70% of cases, they do come with the risk for certain side effects, so they may not be the best choice for everyone.

Not only should you consider all of your treatment options before you default to ED drugs, but you should also consider whether addressing some underlying health issues might resolve your ED. Risk factors such as high cholesterol, high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, obesity and a lengthy list of others can contribute to ED, so making it your first step to address those issues might resolve your ED without the need for medications or other treatments.



Myth #5

Erectile Dysfunction Only Affects Men

Technically speaking, erectile dysfunction is a male disorder—it only physically affects people who have male reproductive organs. The key word here, however, is “physically.” The effects of erectile dysfunction are not only physical—they are psychological and emotional as well. More than that, they can affect your partner just as much as they affect you.

Think about this—if you find yourself unable to perform sexually, you might start to wonder what is wrong with you.





The more you think about it, the more concerned you become and, in many cases, that worry turns to anxiety that then becomes a causative factor all on its own. Your fear of failure causes so much anxiety that you find yourself unable to perform. It is a self-fulfilling prophecy and a vicious cycle.

Now, think about it from your partner's point of view. While you're busy wondering why you are unable to perform, your partner is wondering whether it is their fault. They start to wonder if you aren't attracted to them or if they've done something wrong. These worries on top of your own worries combine in a giant cloud of anxiety that hangs over both of your heads.

If you are having trouble working through the psychological impact of your erectile dysfunction, find help! Erectile issues are no more or less valid than clinical mental health problems—if it is affecting your life on a daily basis, it is significant, and you need to work through it. Ask your doctor for a referral to a therapist or talk about the other options that might be available.

By now you should have a more thorough understanding of what erectile dysfunction is and what it is not. Use this information to your advantage and talk to your doctor about your concerns. Together you will be able to determine the cause for your erectile issues as well as the proper course of treatment.



How hims can help

We're here to help take the guesswork out of sex. Request a secure online consultation with us and we connect you with an online doctor who can quickly review whether a treatment we offer may be right for you.

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