

Communicate! Be it to a partner, a friend, a doctor or a counsellor. Talk to someone you trust. Counselling may help you (and your partner) create a dialogue for sex that allows you to be open and honest about your sex life.

Make sure that your conditions for sex are being met. Romantic gestures, intimacy, communication, affection and sensuality are all said to be typical female sexual enhancers. What are yours? Talk to your partner about these.

Try and reintroduce sensual touching to your relationship. Enjoy each others body's by holding, stroking, massaging, kissing and hugging, but keep it at a level of touch that is comfortable for you.

Get to know your body. Knowing how your body works can help to reduce stress and anxiety surrounding sex, sexuality and intercourse.

Read! If you would like to read some more about a sexual concern, there are plenty of self-help books you can try. The following are available at most good book stores or from your local public library:

- **Good Loving, Great Sex**, by Rosie King (1997)
- **The Joy of Sex**, by A Comfort (1996)
- **Becoming Orgasmic**, by Heiman and Lopiccolo (1995)

## Who can help me further?

If you would like to discuss a sexual concern with someone, either visit your local doctor or contact a Sexual Health Centre near you.

Sexual Health Centres provide a **free** and **confidential** medical and counselling service for individuals and couples with sexual concerns.

Sydney Sexual Health Centre would particularly like to welcome lesbian women, women from non-English speaking backgrounds and women living with HIV/AIDS to our service. Make an appointment with us or just walk in.

### NO MEDICARE CARD REQUIRED

Hours:

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 10am-6pm

Wednesday 2pm to 6pm

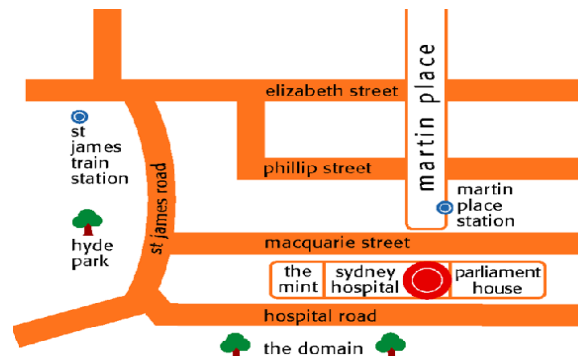
Telephone: (02) 9382 7440

Sexual Health Infoline: 1800 451624

Monday - Friday 9am to 5:30pm

Internet:

[www.sesahs.nsw.gov.au/sydhosp/SSHC.asp](http://www.sesahs.nsw.gov.au/sydhosp/SSHC.asp)



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# WOMEN'S SEXUAL PROBLEMS

SSHC SYDNEY  
SEXUAL  
HEALTH  
CENTRE

## What are female sexual concerns?

We may have sex, but not everybody has a perfect sex life. How many times have you been caught out saying “I’m too tired” or “Not tonight honey, I have a headache”? Have you ever examined why sex just doesn’t do it for you? Well you’re not alone. A recent study has shown that over 43% of women have a sexual concern, be it

- ★ **loss of libido**
- ★ **fluctuating sexual desire**
- ★ **being unable to reach orgasm**
- ★ **having painful sex**
- ★ **not being able to have sex at all.**

For many women, these sexual concerns have become part of their lives and many find them very hard to talk about.

*Did you know?*

*30% of women orgasm through intercourse  
40% through outer stimulation  
and  
30% never orgasm with a partner*

## What is Anorgasmia?

Anorgasmia is a term given to women who have difficulty achieving an orgasm on their own or with a partner. Yet there are a whole range of ways in which women can respond orgasmically. This may be through intercourse, self-pleasuring or outer stimulation. Therefore, anorgasmia only becomes an issue if a woman is unsatisfied with her orgasmic response.

## What is Vaginismus?

Vaginismus is the involuntary spasm of the vaginal muscle that occurs when penetration is attempted. This may lead to the inability to insert a tampon, penis or to have a pap smear. Vaginismus may be the result of a physical condition and although this is uncommon, a medical check up is recommended.

## What is Desire Discrepancy?

Desire discrepancy is when your sex drive is different to that of your partner. We tend not to realise that sexual desire fluctuates from minute to minute depending on each partner’s emotional and physical well being. As a result, desire discrepancy can cause a lot of stress and greatly affect the state of a relationship.

## Why?

There are many reasons why women have sexual concerns,

- ★ **Lack of information about their body**
- ★ **Unfulfilled sexual expectation**
- ★ **Anxiety about sex and/or intimacy**
- ★ **Difficulty talking about their sexual needs**
- ★ **Relationship difficulties**
- ★ **Having a physical problem which prevents the enjoyment of sex**

But whatever the reason, something can be done about these sexual concerns.

## What can I do?

As part of the assessment of your sexual concern you should see your doctor to rule out any physical problems.

Fatigue, chronic illness, drugs, alcohol, medications, hormonal changes, guilt, anger, worry, stress, poor self esteem, work, kids and your environment can all affect the quality of your sex life. Examine your own lifestyle and your environment. What is causing you stress and reducing your sex drive?