

Intimacy and Heart Disease: Your Emotions

If you have just learned that you have a heart problem, or have recently had a heart attack or heart surgery, you may be concerned about your love life and whether it is safe to have sex. You may not feel a desire to be intimate right now. These can be normal emotions after being diagnosed with a heart problem. Your doctor can give you specific instructions on when it is safe to resume sexual activity. In most cases, after a heart attack or stent placement, it is usually safe to resume sexual activity after about a week. After open heart surgery, you may need to wait 6 to 8 weeks. For some severe and rare heart conditions, your doctor may recommend waiting to resume sexual activity until your condition has stabilized. Your doctor can give you specific guidelines.



Your feelings are normal

Many people feel afraid, depressed, angry, or sad when they have heart trouble. This is normal. You may worry that your body will never be the same. You may be afraid for the future. You may even feel angry that this happened to you. These feelings can affect your desire for sex. But with treatment for your heart condition and over time, your interest in sex will most likely return and you will be able to be intimate safely. Check with your doctor if you think your heart medicines are reducing your sexual desire. For most people, having sex should not damage your heart or cause a heart attack. Talk with your doctor if you develop symptoms during sexual activity.

Overcoming negative feelings

The first step toward overcoming negative feelings is knowing what is troubling you. Start by trying to:

- Acknowledge what you are feeling.
- Be patient with yourself.
- Talk with your partner about your feelings.
- Discuss your desires and fears in a supportive environment.
- Don't be afraid to seek professional help as needed

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