



EXCEPTIONAL CARE FOR REMARKABLE WOMEN

By Joseph Gauta, MD, FACOG

There is a silent epidemic among women that not only causes physical and emotional pain but can jeopardize loving relationships if left untreated.

It's called Dyspareunia, the medical term for painful intercourse and is a condition that affects up to 60% of women. According to Joseph Gauta, MD, founder of Especially for Women Obstetrics and Gynecology and The Florida Bladder Institute, "Many women experience painful intercourse at some point in their lives, for a variety of very normal reasons. Dyspareunia is defined as persistent or recurrent genital pain that occurs just before, during or after intercourse and that causes you personal distress. Unfortunately, many women continue to suffer in silence because they are embarrassed to talk with their doctor, partner or even friends about this very real and very painful condition."

Though most women with dyspareunia complain of superficial pain, which occurs upon penetration, the location of pain and frequency of pain varies greatly. *If you experience painful intercourse, you may feel:*

- Pain with every penetration, even while putting in a tampon
- Pain with certain partners or just under certain circumstances
- New pain after previously pain-free intercourse
- Superficial (entry) pain
- Deep pain during thrusting, which is often described as "something being bumped"
- Burning pain or aching pain

Dr. Gauta, a board certified doctor of obstetrics and gynecology and a fellow of the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology said, "Any one of these symptoms can be distressing and should be discussed with your doctor because there are treatments that can help eliminate or reduce this common problem."

Possible Causes of Dyspareunia

Causes of painful intercourse can vary by the location of the pain. When experiencing entry

pain, the problem may be as simple as inadequate lubrication and there are many over the counter products to try. If you are using these products you should know that it is possible to have an allergic reaction to foams, jellies or latex. An improperly fitted diaphragm, cervical cap or surgically placed contraceptive device may also be the cause of pain and easily remedied.

Injury or irritation from an accident, pelvic surgery, episiotomy or even a congenital abnormality may be the culprit. Involuntary spasms of the muscles of the vaginal wall can make attempts at penetration very painful and a condition known as vestibulitis, causes painful penetration which is characterized by unexplained stinging or burning around the opening of your vagina.

Deep pain usually occurs with deep penetration and may be more pronounced with certain positions. Some causes may include endometriosis, pelvic inflammatory disease, infections, uterine prolapse, retroverted uterus, uterine fibroids, cystitis, irritable bowel syndrome, hemorrhoids and ovarian cysts.

Scarring from surgeries that involve your pelvic area, including hysterectomy, can sometimes cause painful intercourse. In addition, medical treatments for cancer, such as radiation and chemotherapy, can cause changes that make sex painful.

Finally, there are a number of emotional factors to consider as emotions are deeply intertwined with sexual activity and may play a role in any type of sexual pain. "If you experience anxiety, depression, concerns about your physical appearance, fear of intimacy or relationship problems, it can contribute to painful intercourse." Dr. Gauta said. "Stress can also lead to painful intercourse as your pelvic muscles are very sensitive to stressors. Learning relaxation techniques can greatly help with easing or eliminating pain."

Sometimes, it can be difficult to tell whether psychological factors are a cause or result of dyspareunia. Initial pain can lead to fear of recurring pain, making it difficult to relax, which can lead to more pain. Dr. Gauta stressed the importance of being honest and open with your doctor during routine and problem-oriented examinations.

"It is so important to talk to us about all problems or concerns you may have even though they may not seem related. Pelvic pain could be a symptom of a bladder disorder, bowel obstruction or other seemingly unrelated condition. If diagnosed early, many health issues can be easily treated. He added, "There is nothing you should be embarrassed to talk about. If it is a problem for you, it is a problem for us. We're here to help."

A skilled team of women's health specialists

Especially for Women is comprised of an elite team of highly skilled and experienced women's health care specialists and surgeons including: *Joseph Gauta, MD, FACOG, Jody Alexander, MD, FACOG, Emily Clements, DO, Amanda Schultz, MPH, PA-C and Denise Waszkowski, CNM, ARNP.* The practice maintains three convenient locations throughout Collier County to provide the highest quality health care for women of all ages. New patients are being accepted and appointments can be made by calling 239-592-1388.



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Website: www.especiallyforwomen.net