

Could Your Over-the-Counter Medicine Affect Your Sex Life?

Sexual changes are not always caused by aging. Some medicines you can buy without a prescription may affect desire, comfort, or arousal. Not everyone experiences these effects.

Medicine or product	What you might notice
Allergy medicines and nighttime sleep aids (Benadryl, some Unisom and ZzzQuil products)	Dryness, sleepiness, or less interest in sex. Some contain antihistamines that reduce moisture and cause sedation.
Cold medicines with decongestants (Sudafed/pseudoephedrine)	Occasionally, difficulty with erections or arousal because blood vessels narrow.
Heartburn medicine (Tagamet/cimetidine)	With repeated use, possible lower sexual desire or erection problems because it can interfere with male hormone activity.
Motion-sickness medicines (some Dramamine products)	Sleepiness or dryness that may make sexual activity less comfortable.
Pain relievers and supplements (ibuprofen, naproxen, melatonin, saw palmetto)	Sexual effects have been reported or studied, but evidence that these products directly cause problems is limited.

What can you do?

- Check the **active ingredients** on the package. Brand names may have different formulas.
- If you notice a change after starting a medicine, ask your clinician or pharmacist whether it could be contributing.
- Do not stop a medicine you need without discussing alternatives. Other health conditions and prescription medicines can also affect sexual function.
- Lubricants or vaginal moisturizers may help with dryness; persistent symptoms deserve a conversation with your clinician.

Remember: Sexual health is part of overall health. It is okay to ask questions at any age.

Educational information only; not a substitute for individualized medical advice.