

Premature Ejaculation: Sex Therapy Beats Drugs

By Michael Castleman

Forty years ago, pioneering sex researchers William Masters, M.D. and Virginia Johnson, invented sex therapy by developing a simple, effective program that cures men's number one sex problem, rapid or "premature" ejaculation (PE).

But today, few physicians have the time or sex therapy training to teach men to last as long as they'd like. Physicians are more likely to prescribe low-dose antidepressant medication. However, drugs are *not* the best treatment.

Not the Drug, but a Side Effect

The drugs work, sort of, but actually what "works" is a side effect. When today's most popular antidepressants were introduced (Prozac, Paxil, Zoloft, etc.), many people complained of sexual side effects, loss of libido, delayed orgasm, or inability to have orgasms. In men, delayed orgasm meant lasting longer. Drug makers began urging doctors to harness this side effect to treat PE.

But the drugs don't work that well. SSRIs typically delay ejaculation several minutes. But that's a far cry from what hundreds of songs say lovers want: "all night long." The drugs may also cause other side effects: nausea, headache, diarrhea, libido loss, and erection impairment.

The pharmaceutical companies now tout low-dose antidepressants for PE, telling doctors that the drugs "show men they can last longer and boost their confidence." Then, when men stop taking the drugs, they magically continue to last as long as they'd like. Not true. Typically, when men who gain better ejaculatory control from antidepressants stop taking them, they revert to PE.

Better Results Without Drugs

The non-drug approach works better. It teaches men to last longer for good and causes no side effects. It's also preferable for other reasons:

- It's cheaper. All most men need is a book that explains the sex therapy approach to this problem. My book, *Great Sex*, explains it in detail for \$16.95. Drugs cost a lot more.
- It's more empowering. Drugs just delay ejaculation. They don't teach men anything about themselves or about lovemaking. But when men learn to last longer without drugs, they feel empowered. They gain self-esteem. And when people feel better about themselves, they enjoy better sex.
- It's better for sex. Drugs don't change the way couples make love. The sex therapy program for lasting longer increases erotic sensuality. It takes pressure off the penis by spreading erotic stimulation around the man's entire body. In other words, it teaches men the value of whole-body massage. One of women's leading complaints about the way men make love is that it's too focused on the genitals. Many women prefer sex that's based on whole-body massage. The sex therapy approach to lasting longer shows men that the way women prefer to make love is also good for them.
- It's better for the relationship. When the man pops a pill, there is no change in the couple's intimacy. Using the non-drug approach, both lovers working together to teach the man to last longer. Working together on an intimate problem enhances the couple's intimacy.

Sex therapists estimate that they can successfully teach 90 to 95 percent of men to last as long as they'd like without drugs. But if you're one of the 5 to 10 percent who need medication, try it. Unfortunately, many doctors view drugs as the first-choice treatment. Actually, drugs should be the *last resort*.

If the self-help program in *Great Sex* doesn't provide sufficient relief, try sex therapy. Sex therapists can usually help single men or couples resolve this problem in a few months. To find a sex therapist near you, visit aasect.org, the American Association of Sex Educators, Counselors, and Therapists, or sstarnet.org, the Society for Sex Therapy and Research.