

Sexual Pain

Painful intercourse or dyspareunia is common in women with 1 in 2 women experiencing some pain during their lifetime. Pain with intercourse is common after having a baby and at the time of menopause but can affect women at any stage of their life. In 20% of women the pain is persistent, and can affect sexual relationships, desire and libido and quality of life.

There are many possible causes of sexual pain. Some of these may include

- Tension in the pelvic floor muscles
- Recurrent infections e.g thrush
- Inflammatory conditions of the skin and vulval area
- Hormonal changes associated with breastfeeding or menopause
- Irritation, injury, or compression of the pudendal nerve
- Genetic factors
- Psychological factors such as mood, relationship issues and past trauma

Common conditions associated with pain with sex include

- Vaginismus: involuntary contraction of the pelvic floor muscles during vaginal penetration.
- Vestibulodynia: pain and increased sensitivity (burning, cutting, splitting sensations) in the vulval /vaginal area, the region just outside the vagina. This can be painful with light touch or without any provocation at all.

At Body Logic Pelvic Health Clinic, we want to understand your pain experience and help you make sense of your condition. Pain is always real, and not just 'psychological' or 'in your head' but your thoughts and feeling can influence your pain experience.

Our pelvic health physiotherapists will work together with you to design a management plan that you are comfortable with, often including pelvic floor muscle relaxation, general body relaxation strategies, breathing techniques, and a graded return to pleasurable sexual activity. We understand that this is a very private sensitive issue, and you are always in control of the management options.

factors that could be contributing to your pain as part of holistic whole-body management.

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Additional Resources

The pelvic pain foundation is a not-for-profit that helps to improve the quality of life of people with pelvic pain. Find out more here: <https://www.pelvicpain.org.au/>