

COVID-19, CANCER AND SEXUALITY

A LOOK BACK AT OUR WEBINAR ON THURSDAY, MAY 7

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PROCURE
Halte au cancer de la prostate.
The Force Against Prostate Cancer.

In this trying time, it is important to remember that this is an unusual situation and that it can also generate intense emotions. If you feel more anxious, stressed, or worried than usual, this is normal. Although these are natural, expected, human reactions, there are many ways to increase our resilience during this time.

HERE ARE 5 POINTS TO REMEMBER.

1. SEXUAL DESIRE VARIES FROM PERSON TO PERSON AND THE IMPORTANT THING IS TO RESPECT YOURSELF

Pandemic or not, our sexual desire may be there as well as not at all. A healthy sex life is important to many people, but it can be difficult to achieve, especially after cancer. **Achieving and maintaining healthy sex requires open communication and sometimes the help of a sex therapist.** That said, it is perfectly normal, when stress gets involved, not to feel sexual desire, or even not wanting to be intimate with our partner. The important thing is to accept what we feel and above all to not feel guilty about it.

2. TAKING THE TIME TO RECONNECT WITH YOUR INTIMACY CAN GO A LONG WAY

After treatment for prostate cancer, many men who consult say they experience feelings of happiness, sadness and fear at the same time and that their self-esteem... is under the carpet. They also stressed the need to continue having intimate relationships with their partner, despite their inability to have full sex. It should be understood that an erection is not a panacea. **Touching, kissing, holding hands, walking together, talking at length and just being together can be deeply satisfying and even more important in a relationship. This is an aspect of intimacy that should not be forgotten.**

3. BE IMAGINATIVE, READY FOR THE UNEXPECTED AND LAUGH WHEN IT HAPPENS

Sexuality should not be a « **serious matter** » or a «marathon». Allow yourself to stop and rest if you are tired. One of the biggest hurdles is performance anxiety, which can happen if you are too focused on your erection. Did you know that the skin and the brain are your most important sexual organs? Be aware that a cancer diagnosis or treatment should not dictate what you can and cannot do. Use your imagination, humor and why not toys to explore new ways to get to know each other better or just to have fun and make each other feel good.

4. YOU ARE TWO, TALK TO EACH OTHER. DON'T BE AFRAID OF WORDS AND TEAM UP

Before any real progress is made, couples, heterosexual or same-sex couples, must take the time to think and remember why sex is so special and what they are really missing out on. **Intimacy and sex promote a bond through passion, love and, above all, acceptance.** Patients may feel insecure due to certain changes in their bodies, or they may fear that they no longer have or even deserve acceptance from their partner. An important first step in fulfilling your physical relationship is **to discuss your mutual desires to be together.** If you can find intimacy and comfort in romantic moments, this will make your physical challenges much easier to tackle as a team.

5. A SELF-DISCLOSURE HAS TO BE IT DESERVED!

If you start a new relationship, there may be concerns about sexual problems and other side effects like bladder or bowel problems. Some men fear that erection problems will affect their chances of having a new relationship. The fear of rejection as well as the fear of revealing yourself, of not being up to it, of being disappointed or of having a broken heart is natural, regardless of age, whether or not you have undergone treatment for Prostate cancer. Certainly, sexuality is not the only criteria when looking for a soul mate. **Her or his personality, values, projects and life goals, availability as well as your common interests are so much more important than a relationship based on ... sexual performance.**

«My husband had surgery 5 years ago. It's an adaptation to sexuality, it's true, but love and patience make the difference. Today, he can have erections, not like before, but it's okay and we adapt. We must accept that it will never be like before. The important thing is that he is alive!»