

Where: PR2 - Topic 3 – Module 3.1 – First video on Video resources: “Sexuality and the older adult”

<https://edusexage-mooc.eu/topic3/>

VIDEO: Sexuality and the older adult

What are ways to stay sexually active?

Colleen Christmas, M.D., Associated Professor of Medicine, Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine: As we get older, it's important to know that most people are quite interested in sex when they get older. In fact, survey shows, that majority of older adults, stay sexually active, right up into very advanced ages. Sexual activities are healthy and normal, even though that is not what we see in the media and movies and so forth, it's not what's portrait. Usually in the American culture, sex is reserved for the young and the beautiful. But it's true that older people remain interested in sex and are able to have sex right up into their 80s, 90s, even a hundred years old.

How can an older adult increase libido?

Colleen Christmas, M.D.: most older adults actually have pretty normal sexual drive right up until about age 75 where testosterone decreases both for man and for woman and can contribute to declining libido. So, in older adults who are experiencing declining libido, it's important to evaluate for treatable causes for example medications are really common cause of declining libido and can be changed for example blood pressure medications or antidepressant medications can impact libido and when switch to other agents can often be improved. There are also other conditions that if they are not treated, they can impact libido, so depression itself, that's a very common reason why people have declines in libido and when treated, people do much better and return to a normal sex life. There are other elements that are common with aging that can contribute to challenges with sexual activity, so people who have heart diseases might have a normal sex drive, but feel anxious about having sexual activity that may be in some way it's going to damage their heart and they should talk to their doctor about that and understand what they can and can't do. Or people with arthritis, may find it challenging to have sex in certain positions but working that through with your partner, perhaps with the guidance of your health care provider, can help you come up with ways to remain quite satisfied with their sexual activity, by using other approaches.

What are important symptoms of declining sexual activity?

Colleen Christmas, M.D.: symptoms of declining sexual activity are the same for older adults as they are for younger adults. Difficulty performing in any sort of way, difficulty with arousal or interest in sex, all of those can be addressed in older adults in the same way they could in younger adults. The most important thing is to remember that they're important to address. I feel, like sexual health is just as important to address with your health care provider as chest pain or stomach upset or depression or any of the other things you might see your doctor for. We know that people, who remain sexually active into the advanced age, tend to live longer. So, staying happy with your sex life and active is important for your overall health as well.