

Dyspareunia

The medical term for painful intercourse is Dyspareunia, defined as a persistent or recurrent genital pain that occurs just before, during or after intercourse. It can be caused by structural to psychological problems.

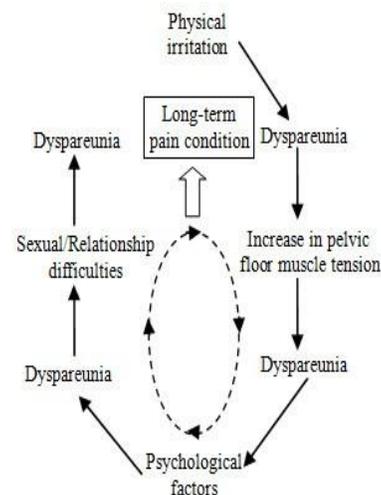
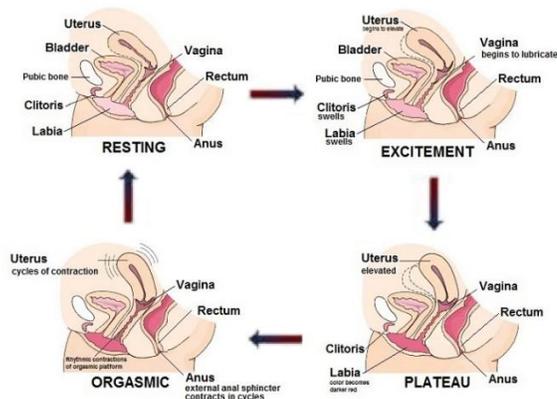
Some common diagnoses are:

- Hypertonic dysfunctional pelvic floor (muscles are too tight)
- Chronic UTIs
- Prolapse
- Vaginismus (tightening of the vaginal muscle at penetration)
- Vulvar Vestibulitis
- Vulvodynia
- IC
- Atrophy
- Other causes.... stitches after childbirth, pressure on spinal nerves in pelvis, pelvic inflammatory disease, vaginal dryness, or narrowing vaginal opening.

Female Sexual Response Cycle Phase

To understand how we resolve painful intercourse, we must understand the female sexual response cycle phase. During the excitement (arousal phase), the pelvic muscle must relax to allow painless intercourse. Overly contracted pelvic floor muscles perpetuate the painful condition by preventing healing and making intercourse more painful.

Female Sexual Response Cycle Phases



Cycle of Dyspareunia

Cycle of Dyspareunia

There is a cycle that often occurs with painful intercourse, called the Cycle of Dyspareunia.

Following a physical irritation of some kind that causes pain with intercourse, there is a protective guarding response that occurs that creates tension in the pelvic floor muscle. The protective guarding mechanism needs to be unlearned, so that the body begins to remember that inserting something into the vagina does not need to be painful. The tension in the pelvic muscle also needs to be released. Desensitizing these muscles is a crucial part of the management of conditions when sex is painful.

3 Elements Needed for Comfortable Intercourse...

- **Vaginal Lubrication:** vaginal walls produce lubrication. Your provider can make recommendations if there is vaginal dryness.
- **Vaginal Expansion:** During arousal, the vagina increases in length by about 40% and expands in width at the upper end by about 6 cm. A vaginal dilator is effective in restoring this function.
- **Relaxation of the Pelvic Floor Muscles:** During the arousal phase the pelvic floor muscle relaxes, blood flow increases, and swelling of the clitoris occurs. Women with weak pelvic floor muscles may have difficulty achieving orgasm. Pelvic Floor Therapy fatigues the muscle to release tension contributing to painful intercourse, as well as increase vascularity.

Studies show that the great majority of women and men, provided they are in good enough health, and have an adequate partner, remain sexually interested and active until the end of life.

Empowering Women. Restoring Hope.