



## Decreased Female Libido

Decreased libido or sexual desire is the most common cause of female sexual dysfunction. It is also called hypo-active sexual desire disorder (HSDD). The largest study of female sexual dysfunction (FSD) shows that 43% of women in the United States are affected. Among the women with FSD, 51% had low libido.

Libido can be affected by many factors. Psychological factors such as stress, fatigue, depression, childhood sexual abuse, body image issues, lack of interest or attraction to partner and sexual performance anxiety have all been demonstrated as causes of impaired sexual desire.

Medications can reduce libido. Antidepressants and beta-blockers have been shown to aggravate low sexual desire.

Menopause is associated with decreased levels of hormones and is associated with decreased libido. Testosterone in women comes from the ovary and the adrenal gland. Testosterone levels decrease rapidly with age. From age 20 to 40 the average testosterone level drops by 50%. From age 40 to 50 it drops another 25%. Estrogen levels decrease rapidly at menopause. Vaginal dryness due to lower estrogen levels may result in pain with intercourse, which may contribute to decreased sexual desire.

Studies have not demonstrated a pharmacologic treatment for hypoactive sexual desire disorder. Vaginal estrogen prescriptions can help with vaginal atrophy due to low estrogen.

The FDA has not approved testosterone treatment for HSDD. Studies have not shown a benefit to treatment with testosterone over placebo treatment.