Peyronie’s disease

Facts, questions, and answers about Peyronie’s disease

Information for patients with diabetes mellitus

Please note: This presentation is not a substitute for examination by and consultation with a qualified doctor and does not represent medical advice.
Peyronie’s disease – What is it?

In men with Peyronie’s disease (alternatively called *induratio penis plastica*) palpable tissue nodes form in the shaft of the penis. These so-called plaques develop following minor inflammation in the tissue between the lining of the cavernous bodies of the penis and the cavernous bodies themselves. Although the plaques are initially soft, they either increasingly harden to become rough scar tissue or they calcify.
How often does it occur?

On average, approximately 3% of men over 50 years of age are affected by Peyronie’s disease. In people with diabetes mellitus, however, the risk of its development is considerably higher. As a diabetic patient, it is therefore important you know the symptoms and first signs of Peyronie’s disease. The earlier it is recognised, the more treatment options are available.

This presentation gives you an overview of the condition and tries to answer some initial questions you might have. If you notice any symptoms or are unsure about anything, please talk to your doctor.
What are the consequences of the condition?

Peyronie’s disease is usually a progressive disease. This means that symptoms are likely to worsen without treatment.

The penis can shrink as a result of scar tissue formation. It can also result in erectile dysfunction and altered sensation. Especially in severe forms, sexual intercourse (penetration) is considerably impaired, sometimes becoming completely impossible.
Diabetics are more frequently affected

The risk of developing Peyronie’s disease is up to 6-times higher in diabetics than in men without diabetes.

Furthermore, in diabetics the disorder often takes a more severe course, with the likelihood of greater penis curvature or erectile dysfunction.
What are the first signs of the disease?

The first signs of Peyronie’s disease are often small, palpable nodules in the shaft of the penis. Pain may also occur in the hardened areas. Another early typical symptom is painful erections. In patients with diabetes, however, pain and painful erections are rare.

**Hint:** Examine your (unerect) penis for small nodules. If you can feel such hardened areas under the skin, talk to your doctor.
Early signs

Peyronie’s disease occurs in two phases. During the first phase, plaques form, pain can occur, and the first curvatures or other deformations of the penis become visible (usually during an erection).
How does the condition progress?

During the first phase, the clinical picture can change continuously – curvatures may become more pronounced or change direction. In a minority of cases, spontaneous healing might also be possible.

After about two years, the condition will enter a second, stable phase. The plaques harden and the curvatures become static, i.e. they no longer change. In many cases, the penis length will have become shortened.
Importance of early diagnosis

If the condition is diagnosed at an early stage, more treatment options are available. If no deformations of the penis have yet occurred, these can sometimes be completely prevented through use of medicines.

For patients for whom sexual intercourse is greatly impaired due to severe penile curvature, surgery is often the only option to straighten the penis.
How can Peyronie’s disease be treated?

Depending on the stage of the disease and the symptoms, various treatment options are available.

Possible treatments include oral medicines, intralesional injections or extracorporeal shock wave therapy – to name just three options. The choice of the correct medicine or suitable treatment form depends on the main symptoms and how far the disease has already progressed.

*Hint:* It is important you talk to your doctor about treatment options as early as possible.
What about surgery?

The final option is surgery. If penile curvature is so severe that sexual intercourse is no longer possible, the penis can be straightened again by means of an operation. A frequent side effect of surgery, however, is further shortening of the penis. A worsening of erection quality is also possible.
How can a diagnosis be confirmed?

If your doctor suspects Peyronie’s disease, he/she will usually refer you to a urologist, who among other subjects specialises in disorders of the penis. The urologist will examine your stretched penis, in order to determine the position and extent of the plaques.

In addition, they will often perform an ultrasound examination, in order to obtain a picture of the extent and degree of calcification of the plaques. Only then can the correct treatment for you be selected.

**Hint:** If you already suffer from penile curvature, it can be helpful if you take photos at home and bring them to the consultation. You should photograph your erect penis from above, from the front, and from the side.
Peyronie’s disease at a glance

• Tissue nodes form under the skin and cause an unnatural curvature of the penis – mainly during an erection. Why this happens is not yet known.

• Left untreated, the clinical picture worsens in most cases. This can result in erectile failure.

• Peyronie’s disease is not a malignant disease, but it can be very stressful for the man involved and his partner.
Important points for you as a diabetic

• Diabetics are at increased risk of developing Peyronie’s disease.

• Pay attention to possible symptoms of Peyronie’s disease: If you notice palpable nodes on the shaft of your penis or if you suffer from penis pain/painful erections, talk to your doctor.

The earlier that Peyronie’s disease is recognised, the more treatment options are available.
I’m a diabetic but do not yet have any signs of Peyronie’s disease. What can I do to prevent it?

There is no effective method of preventing the condition.

However, as you belong to a risk group for the development of Peyronie’s disease, you should regularly examine your penis for small nodules and watch out for the other initial signs.
Where can I find further information?

You can find a comprehensive general overview about Peyronie’s disease on the internet at www.peyronies-disease.info

If you have any specific questions, please ask your doctor in confidence.
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