

SCI EDUCATION TEAM

SEXUALITY AFTER SPINAL CORD INJURY

What is Sexuality?

Sexuality can mean many different things to many different people. In general it is the way we express ourselves sexually and can include biological, erotic, physical, emotional, social or spiritual feelings and behaviors.

How does my spinal cord injury impact my sexuality?

Loss or change of muscle movement, sensation, and sexual reflexes can occur after a spinal cord injury which can impact arousal, orgasms, fertility, sexual desire, and self-esteem. How a spinal cord injury impacts you may depend on your specific injury.

Can I still have sex after my spinal cord injury?

Yes! Many people have very fulfilling sex lives after their injury with appropriate education, adaptive equipment and possible medical intervention.

Can I still have an orgasm after my spinal cord injury?

Most people can still have orgasms after their spinal cord injury although it depends on the location and severity of their injury. It is important to know that an orgasm may feel different than it did before your injury and may take longer to achieve. If you are having difficulty there are options such as high amplitude vibration that may help.

Can I still have children after my spinal cord injury?

Yes! People of all levels of injury have had children after their spinal cord injury. Pregnancy can be more complicated and risky after spinal cord injury so a medical professional should be consulted. Also ejaculation and sperm motility may be affected after injury but there are various options available to navigate these issues. If you are sexually active after your injury you should continue to practice safe sex techniques to avoid unwanted pregnancy and STIs.

Who can I talk to if I have more questions?

Gaylord has a team of trained medical professionals including psychiatrists, PAs, Physical therapists, occupational therapists, nurses, and social workers who are available for consultations to help navigate challenges you may be having with sexuality after your spinal cord injury.

Sources:

- Facing Disability: Sex and Fertility Information. <https://facingdisability.com/resources/sex-and-fertility>
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- Mount Sinai Hospital "Sex, Love, and Intimacy after SCI" <https://www.sexualtysci.org/>
- Somers, Martha Spinal Cord Injury : Functional Rehabilitation Third Edition , 2010. Page 348 – 365