

# Intimacy and personal relationships



**Talking about intimacy,  
sex and personal concerns.**

## You and your body

We recognise that illness can affect the way your body looks and feels. It is important that you feel good about yourself as this can help in your relationships with those around you. The quality of your life can be improved and you are less likely to feel sad, anxious and depressed.

When a person's body is altered by illness it can bring new challenges to your closest relationships; you may have concerns about how to manage these challenges. If you do have concerns about intimacy and sex and the effect illness is having, please feel free to raise the subject with your clinician.

## If you don't have a partner or spouse at the moment

If you are not in an intimate relationship right now but would like to engage in one, finding a new partner after the development of your illness may worry you.

Deciding how to talk to others about how your illness affects your body can cause anxiety because of fear of rejection. Your clinician can talk this through with you so that you feel more confident when developing new relationships and thinking about sex.

## You, sexual expression and feeling happy about yourself

Sexual expression can be important so please feel you can discuss your concerns with a member of the team.

We are all sexual beings and as such sex is something that is part of all of our lives.



**rowcroft**  
hospice



When we feel confident and happy about our body and about sex it can be a source of great pleasure, but when we don't feel happy about ourselves it can make us feel sad and distressed. Dissatisfaction and disappointment related to sex can lead to depression, a sense of isolation and an avoidance of physical contact.

Your clinician may be able to offer advice and help that will make you feel happier about sex and sexual intimacy.

### Organisations that may be of help

#### **NHS Sex Therapy Clinic**

A GP or Nurse Specialist can refer patients with sexual difficulties for support and advice. Local clinic at Newton Abbot.

01392 677077 / 07972 188809

[dpn-tr.stc@nhs.net](mailto:dpn-tr.stc@nhs.net)

#### **Relate**

Relationship Counselling, Sex Therapy, Family Counselling (not all services are offered at all locations).

[www.relate.org.uk](http://www.relate.org.uk)

#### **South Devon Branch of Relate**

01803 297854

Email: [office@asdevonrelate.wanadoo.co.uk](mailto:office@asdevonrelate.wanadoo.co.uk)

#### **BBC**

The BBC site offers advice about all aspects of health including sexual function and intimacy.

[www.bbc.co.uk/health](http://www.bbc.co.uk/health)

#### **The Multiple Sclerosis Trust**

Offers advice and support to people affected by MS including an online chat room.

0800 032 3839

Email: [info@mstrust.org](mailto:info@mstrust.org)

[www.mstrust.org.uk](http://www.mstrust.org.uk)

#### **The Sexual Advice Association**

The Sexual Advice Association was set up to help sufferers of impotence (erectile dysfunction) and their partners and to raise awareness of the condition.

[www.sda.uk.net](http://www.sda.uk.net)

Helpline: 0207 486 7262

#### **NHS Direct**

Offers online health information and links to other useful organisations.

[www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk)

These organisations offer support, advice and information to a range of people in different circumstances. We hope you will find some of them useful to you.

#### **Where can I get more information?**

If you would like further information please speak to the clinician involved in your care.

If you require this information in an alternative format please call 01803 210800