

A photograph of two pumpkins on a bed of autumn leaves. The pumpkins are orange and have green stems. The leaves are in various shades of red, orange, and yellow. The background is a soft, out-of-focus bokeh of light.

# ***Diabetes Corner***

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## **Sexual Problems of Diabetes**

**Sexual function problems are a common health problem as you age. Having diabetes can cause it to occur earlier and be more severe. Diabetes can damage blood vessels and nerves. Men may have difficulty with erections or ejaculation. Women may experience problems with sexual response and vaginal lubrication. Persons who keep their blood sugar under control can lower their risk for sexual problems.**

**Uncontrolled diabetes can lead to damage to autonomic nerves. These are the nerves that control internal organs such as your heart, lungs, digestive system, bladder and your sexual response. Reduced blood flow resulting from damage to blood vessels also contribute to sexual dysfunction problems.**

**The most common sexual problem for males is Erectile Dysfunction (ED). ED is defined as the consistent inability to have an erection firm enough for sexual intercourse.**

**Sexual problems for females may include: decreased vaginal lubrication (dryness), uncomfortable or painful sexual intercourse, decreased or no desire for sexual intercourse or decreased or absent sexual response.**

**There are several risk factors for sexual problems: poor glucose control, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, kidney disease, alcohol abuse, being overweight, being physically inactive, blood vessel disease, side effects of certain medications, psychological factors (depression, anxiety), smoking or other forms of tobacco, and hormonal deficiencies.**

**Talk to your healthcare provider regarding sexual problems, there are lots of new treatments available.**