

Physical and Psychological Implications Of Epilepsy on Developing and Maintaining a Healthy and Sustainable Sex Life.

Guy W. Stoker MA, PGCE, BA (Hons.) March 2019

I'm registered disabled, I have right fronto-temporal lobe epilepsy, and while my condition is completely under control at the moment I know from personal experience how great an impact disability can have on your sex life.

I faced many issues as a young person. My seizures were unpredictable so I didn't get the same chances as others of the same age to explore sexual experiences until I was older as I needed to be monitored.

Anti Epilepsy Drugs (AED) can create or contribute to erectile dysfunction due to causing a change in blood pressure. Erectile issues can of course be exasperated by fear of having a seizure during or after sex (*which can happen, one of the 40 kinds of seizures is only brought on by sexual arousal, and one kind of inter-ictal automatism [bodily action carried out unknowingly during non-convulsive seizures] is masturbation*) which if it occurs can also cause incontinence. AED have, in some cases, been identified as causing fertility issues for both men and women. Epilepsy and AED are also often responsible for many mental health issues for male and female patients, including anxiety and depression. They can also affect the sleep pattern too. So all of those issues combined can make it extremely difficult for someone living with epilepsy to have the confidence to develop a sexual relationship with someone, even if it's what both partners want.

After many years battling many of these issues I'm finally in a position where I am comfortable sharing my experience with others. This has been in no small way down to my own research and knowledge, an extremely understanding partner, and having the facility to talk these issues through with both close friends, family, and professionals alike. In turn, I now lend my ear, entirely nonjudgmentally, to anyone of any age, gender or orientation, who is experiencing these issues because of their disability. I hope that by my having the confidence to speak up and admit to having experienced such issues it will encourage others to do the same.