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Peyronie's Disease

Definition

Peyronie's (pay-ro-nees) disease is an inflammation of the *corpora cavernosa*, or the erectile bodies, in the penis.

Cause

The causes of Peyronie's disease are unknown. In fact, since the description by the French surgeon, Francois Peyronie, in 1743, not a great deal of progress has been made in understanding the reasons and progression of Peyronie's disease. It probably is the result of an inflammation with subsequent scarring of the veins that are in the corpora cavernosa. Occasionally, infection or injury can result in Peyronie's, but for the most part, its cause is unknown.

At-Risk Groups

Peyronie's disease occurs most often in men between the ages of 40 to 60, but can also occur at any age.

Symptoms

The symptoms of Peyronie's disease are:

- Pain on erection.
- Curvature of the penis with erection.
- Difficulty having erections, or impotence.
- A lump in the penis that can be felt when it is soft .

Treatment

Because we are not certain of the reason for Peyronie's disease, it is difficult to plan any treatment that works consistently. There is no definite cure for Peyronie's disease. Sometimes, the symptoms and the disease go away without treatment.

The most common treatment is taking 400-500 units of vitamin E twice a day. If there is no improvement in 12 months, it probably won't work at all.

Potaba is another drug therapy, but it is expensive, has some side effects and doesn't seem to

work any better than vitamin E.

Other treatments that have been tried in the past include steroid injections, ultrasound and radiation therapy. None of these has worked with any consistency. In patients where discomfort is a significant problem, some form of anti-inflammatory drug such as Ibuprofen (*Advil*) can be used.

In patients where the bend is so severe that intercourse is impossible, or impotence has already developed, surgical treatment is probably the only reasonable option. The scarring that causes the bend may need to be removed or cut to straighten the penis, which usually impairs the quality of erections. Therefore, a penile prosthesis is often placed at the same time to provide a good erection that lasts long enough to have penetration and normal sexual relations.

If you have more questions or concerns, don't hesitate to ask your doctor.