

# INTIMACY AND PULMONARY DISEASE



## **Lifespan Cardiovascular Institute**

**Rhode Island Hospital • The Miriam Hospital  
Newport Hospital**

*Delivering health with care.®*

**Center For Cardiac Fitness  
Pulmonary Rehabilitation Program  
The Miriam Hospital**

# CONCERNS

- **COPD patients (women and men) report less frequent sexual activity.**
- **Low self-esteem may interfere with sex for men.**
- **Patients and doctors may be embarrassed to talk about sex.**

# PHYSICAL EXERTION OF SEX

- **Climb 2 flights of stairs for healthier, younger males**
- **Sex =Mild to moderate physical activity**
- **Special Circumstances**
  - **New partners, positions**



# IMPAIRED SEXUAL FUNCTIONING

- **Medication side effects**
  - Diuretics, BP meds, antiarrhythmics, anti-angina, cholesterol, antidepressants
- **Medical illness**
- **Depression**
- **Fear**
- **Body image concerns**

# TREATMENTS

- **Medications (Viagra, Cialis, Levitra)**
  - Not for everyone!
- **Vacuum pump**
- **Suppositories, implants**
- **Moisturizers, lubricants (Replens, K-Y)**
- **Sex therapy, couples therapy, and/or psychotherapy**

# TALKING WITH YOUR DOCTOR

- **Be assertive**
- **Introduce at beginning**
- **Ask other providers**



# PARTNER'S FEARS

- **Normal reaction**
- **Communication**
- **Patience**



# MAINTAINING INTIMACY

- **Talk about your feelings**
- **Participate in common activities**
- **Make alone time**
- **Use positions that require less energy.**
- **Have fun and don't put too much pressure on each other**

# OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- **Increase overall strength**
- **Healthy lifestyle**
- **Diabetes**
- **Intimacy– not just sex!**

## OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- **Ask your doctor if you may use your rescue inhaler prior to sexual activity.**
- **Use a well ventilated room.**
- **Plan to have sex at time of day when you have most energy.**
- **Avoid sex after heavy meal, excessive alcohol intake, or extreme temperatures.**

## 3 KEY POINTS

- **Seek information**
- **Communication**
- **Patience**