

Sexual Dysfunction Association

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The vacuum pump

Vacuum pumps have a long history and have been commercially available since 1985. A pump consists of a clear plastic cylinder and a pump which may be hand or battery operated. The flaccid penis is placed in the cylinder and an air-tight seal is obtained with a lubricating gel with the plastic cylinder pressed firmly down against the body. A partial vacuum is created by pumping the air out from inside the cylinder.

The penis becomes filled up with blood and, when hard enough for intercourse, a plastic ring is slipped from the end of the cylinder around the base of the penis. This traps blood in the penis and the erection can be safely maintained for up to 30 minutes. Some people prefer to use two constriction rings to obtain a stronger and better maintained erection.

The device is effective for more than 90% of men although it may take up to two weeks for you to learn how to use it properly. When you've got it right, it usually takes two to three minutes for you to get a usable erection.

The advantages of a vacuum pump are its relative cheapness - it pays to buy a reliable one - and its freedom from side effects. You occasionally get some bruising but no serious complications have been reported. Don't use it for more than 30 minutes as it can get very uncomfortable.

Pumps are particularly useful for men in a stable relationship who can't get an erection for physical reasons and for whom the only alternative would be putting in a penile prosthesis. It is less attractive to single men and for those with psychological erectile dysfunction. A third of the partners noted that the penis felt colder than normal when a pump was used.

Pumps were once considered to be a gimmick when first introduced but are now being used by increasing numbers of men because they are relatively cheap, non invasive, efficient, and allow many couples to have satisfactory intercourse.

Vacuum devices for a small number of men are available on the NHS under Schedule 2 (see below).

Medical suppliers for vacuum devices

Owen Mumford

Tel: 01993 812 021

Fax: 01993 813 466

Email: info@owenmumford.net

Website: www.owenmumford.co.uk

Impotence Careline: 0845 6000 848

Farnhurst Medical

Tel: 01403 752775

Website: www.farnhurst-medical.co.uk

Vetco UK

Tel: 01424 848 111

MediWatch

Tel: 01788 54 78 88

Website: www.mediwatch.com

Healthcare 2000

Tel: 0113 245 0533

Website: www.healthcare2000.co.uk

EuroSurgical Ltd

Tel: 01483 456007

Website: www.eurosurgical.co.uk

iMEDicare Ltd

Elstree Business Centre

Elstree Way

Borehamwood WD6 1RX

Tel: +44(0) 208 207 5627

Fax: +44(0) 208 953 8403

Mob: +44(0) 7841 579 499

Email: iMEDicare@aol.com

Website: www.imedicare.eu

Genesis Medical

Tel: 020 8451 4100

Website: www.genmedhealth.com

Further information

Schedule 2 says that NHS supplies can only be obtained for erectile dysfunction if a man has:

- Diabetes, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease, poliomyelitis, prostate cancer, severe pelvic injury, single gene neurological disease (e.g. Klinefelter's syndrome), spina bifida or spinal cord injury
- Dialysis for renal failure
- Had NHS treatment for impotence before 15 September 1998
- Severe distress as a result of impotence, as diagnosed at a specialist centre (N.B. this category does not apply to vacuum pumps)

An invitation

..... to enrol as a friend of The Sexual Dysfunction Association. For a small annual subscription you will know that you are contributing to a charity that helps overcome the problems of male and female sexual dysfunction. If you are interested please telephone or write for an application form or complete our on-line registration form.

