

# sex talk.

answers to your questions about sex and relationships

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Friday, October 14

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## What happens if you use Viagra but you don't need it?

Ah, the little blue pill. It seems as though you can't watch TV without seeing a commercial for erectile dysfunction (ED) drugs. Viagra is a prescription drug which helps men with ED get or keep an erection.

How do erections typically work? The arteries which lead into the penis open up, enabling blood to enter the penis more quickly. Simultaneously, the veins leaving the penis constrict – which causes the penis to become erect. So, how does Viagra help with ED? It increases blood flow into the penis by relaxing the smooth muscles which line the blood vessels. This makes and keeps the penis erect.

Most college-aged men usually don't need help with arousal. If there is not a blood flow problem to the penis, taking a pill to increase blood flow will most likely cause a painful erection lasting a few

hours. Using Viagra may cause side effects ranging from headaches to heart attacks. Younger men who do not need Viagra (but choose to take it anyway) could end up with a dependency and not be able to get and/or keep an erection without the drug.

There are many reasons (besides ED) why it can be difficult to get an erection: disinterest in sex, relationship issues, stress, anxiety, diabetes, alcohol or drug use. New research supports the idea that erection difficulties can be caused by both physical and mental factors. If you're having erection problems, make an appointment with a doctor at the UA Campus Health Service at (520) 621-9202.

Bottom line: Just like any other prescription drug, if Viagra hasn't been prescribed to you by your doctor, don't take it.



[www.health.arizona.edu](http://www.health.arizona.edu)

Have a question? Email it to [sextalk@email.arizona.edu](mailto:sextalk@email.arizona.edu)



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HEALTH**

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