

Penile implants to the rescue for men

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Rohit was shattered. His neurological condition made it difficult for him to get an erection. Initially, he was hopeful as the doctor prescribed viagra. When it did not work, he tried the vacuum suction device. When everything failed he was recommended penile prosthetic surgery.

Penile prosthesis, a.k.a, penile implants are medical devices that are implanted or embedded in the erectile tissues of the penis. In normal circumstances the erectile tissues in the penis get filled with blood during sexual arousal. For this to happen, the neural circuits, the genital tissues, the blood vessels in the genital system and hormonal system have to be healthy. At times, due to an illness these get damaged and hence obtaining an erection becomes difficult.

While initially, drugs and therapies are recommended, if they fail, penile implants are suggested. Surgeons and urologists embed rods made of silicon or polyurethane inside the corpora cavernosa of the penis. This procedure carries certain risks like infection and malfunctioning of the implant. However, since they were first introduced in the 1970s, new materials, designs and surgical procedures have greatly improved the outcomes for this surgery.

Research has indicated that most men with penile implants and their partners were satisfied with the result. Apart from erectile dysfunction, penile implants are used in the correction of birth defects of the penis, penile trauma, micropenis and peyronie's disease. It is also used in gender reassignment surgery.

Various types of implants are available — semi-rigid, malleable and inflatable. The semi-rigid one cannot be bent, whereas the malleable one can be bent to a certain extent. These are non-inflatable. In the inflatable variety instead of a solid piece, a hollow tube is embedded. This one contains a radio opaque fluid and can be inflated or deflated as required, thereby mimicking a natural erection.

Statistical data reveals that approximately 20,000 Americans opt for penile implants. A guesstimate for India is around 250 per annum.

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