Dyspareunia

What is Dyspareunia?

Dyspareunia is the medical term for painful intercourse. The cause of the pain is varied and depends on the person.

Why Does Intercourse Hurt?

There are several reasons why intercourse might hurt. Possible causes can be divided into two categories: entrance pain and deep pain.

Pain at the vaginal entrance

- Skin lesion: red areas or sores
- Vulvodynia: burning at the entrance to the vagina
- Adhered scar: episiotomy or surgery scar that gets stuck
- Small vaginal opening
- Spasm of the superficial pelvic floor muscles

Pain deep in the vagina

- Spasm of the pelvic floor muscles
- Organ prolapse
- Infection or irritation in the pelvic cavity
- Abdominal adhesions, endometriosis, irritable bowel syndrome

It is important to tell your doctor (and other health care providers caring for your pelvic area) if you have painful intercourse so that a cause can be identified. Tests can be done to identify a cause and form a treatment plan.
Treatments to Help Decrease Pain

There are many treatments that can help. Here are a few:

**Medical treatments:**
- Topical creams to treat skin lesions
- Medications to relax muscle spasm and relieve pain
- Surgical procedures for skin lesions, organ prolapse, and adhesions

**Therapeutic treatments:**
- Massage and stretching for scars and small vaginal size
- Biofeedback or electrical stimulation for pelvic muscle spasm
- Exercises and stretching for pelvic tension
- Vaginal dilators to stretch the tissues