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Peyronie's Treatments – Traction Therapy and VEDs

When considering treatment for Peyronie's disease, there is a lot to think about. Will a man need surgery? Or will nonsurgical therapies work better?

We've discussed [surgical treatments for Peyronie's disease](#) in the past. Today we're going to look at two nonsurgical treatments – traction therapy and vacuum erection devices – that were recently discussed at the 2014 annual meeting of the American Urological Association.

What is Peyronie's Disease?

Peyronie's disease is a wound healing disorder. A man could injure his penis during sports activity, from energetic sex, or by an unknown cause. When the injury does not heal properly, areas of hardened scar tissue called plaques develop under the skin. These plaques make the penis lose some of its flexibility.

The hallmark of Peyronie's disease is a curved penis. Sometimes this curve is slight and looks more like an indentation. But the penis could also take on a distinct curve or an hourglass shape. Men might experience penile shortening. Pain and [erectile dysfunction](#) are common in men with Peyronie's disease, too.

For some men, intercourse is still manageable; for others, it is impossible. Not surprisingly, Peyronie's disease can have some [emotional consequences](#) as well. Men might feel anxious or depressed and miss the easy intimacy they once shared with their partner.

Traction Therapy

In medicine, traction refers to the process of pulling a body part. The goal is to put that part back in the correct position so that it will stay there. Traction therapy for Peyronie's disease involves the use of a special device that pulls the penis in the opposite direction of the curve. Men wear the device for several hours a day.

In 2013, [Spanish researchers reported that a group of men undergoing traction therapy had good results](#), especially if they wore the device for more than six hours a day with thirty minute breaks every two hours. (Nine hours was the maximum time recommended). After traction therapy, the men's curvature decreased and penis length increased. They also had less pain and better erections.

Vacuum Erection Devices

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[Vacuum erection devices](#), or VEDs, are sometimes used to treat erectile dysfunction. But they work for some men with Peyronie's disease as well.

A VED includes a plastic cylinder, a hand- or battery-operated pump, and a constriction ring. To use a VED, a man places the plastic cylinder over his penis. He then uses the pump to create a vacuum, which improves the amount of blood flowing into the penis and creates an erection. The constriction ring is then placed at the base of the penis to keep the erection.

Recent Research

In May 2014, a group of scientists presented a comparison of traction therapy and vacuum erection devices in rats to attendees of the American Urological Association's annual meeting in Orlando, Florida. Their experiment included fifteen rats which were divided into three groups. The first group underwent traction therapy. The second group received VED treatment. The third group had no treatment at all.

After eight weeks, the researchers found that the rats in the traction therapy group had less curvature compared to those in the other two groups. The rats in the VED group had better erectile function.

The researchers concluded that a combination of treatments "might be a good option" for men with Peyronie's disease.

It's important to remember that this research was conducted on rats, not humans. Scientists may examine the question again at another time.

The Future

Which treatment is best for you? Your urologist can best answer that question. Much depends on how severe your situation is and where you are in the disease process.

If you think you have Peyronie's disease, talk to your doctor. It might feel awkward, but it's an important step. (Please [click here for tips on having this conversation](#).)

Resources

American Urological Association

Lin, Haocheng and Run Wang

"Comparison Of Vacuum Therapy and Penile Traction Therapy on Peyronie's Disease Rat Model"

(Abstract presented at 2014 AUA annual meeting, May 2014, Orlando, Florida)

https://www.auanet.org/university/abstract_detail.cfm?id=PD22-05&meetingID=14ORL

Association of Peyronie's Disease Advocates

“Do I have Peyronie’s disease?”

<http://www.peyroniesassociation.org/what-is-peyronies/do-i-have-peyronies/>

BJU International

Raheem, Amr Abdel, et al.

“The role of vacuum pump therapy to mechanically straighten the penis in Peyronie’s disease”

(Abstract. First published online: April 23, 2010)

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1464-410X.2010.09365.x/abstract>

MedlinePlus

“Traction”

(Last updated: August 30, 2012)

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/002336.htm>

Renal and Urology News

Charnow, Jody A.

“Nonsurgical Peyronie's Treatments Compared”

(May 19, 2014)

<http://www.renalandurologynews.com/nonsurgical-peyronies-treatments-compared/article/347465/>

Sexual Medicine Society of North America

“Traction Therapy for Peyronie’s Disease”

<http://www.sexhealthmatters.org/peyronies-disease/traction-therapy-for-peyronies-disease>

“Vacuum Devices – Erectile Dysfunction”

<http://www.sexhealthmatters.org/erectile-dysfunction/vacuum-devices-erectile-dysfunction>