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Lack of sexual desire, thoughts, fantasies or any interest in sex is referred as Hypoactive Sexual Desire Disorder (HSDD). Rejection or an inability to show interest for sexual advances from the partner can be a persistent phenomenon i.e. it can be a primary loss of desire with any context, partner or stimulation or it could appear intermittently at certain times of life, partner, month or a condition.

Mental exhaustion due to socio-environmental factors such as stress of work, economic distress, demands of growing children and relationship issues (conflicts, anger, lack of trust) can easily dampen and take away the interest for sexual gratification for a woman with an average interest. HSDD could also be due to endocrinological derangements such as low testosterone level or hyperprolactinemia (high prolactin level as in lactation), depression or certain medications including those used to treat depression. It may come as an indirect manifestation from persistent arousal disorder (lack of lubrication, dryness and pain during intercourse), or be caused by thinking "there is nothing exciting about it; it is a chore", or due to repeated orgasmic failures. Loss of

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libido may also have an indirect manifestation: that is if the partner is showing lack of interest for sexual intimacy or suffering from erectile or ejaculatory failures, it can also dampen the desire in the women on the long run. When a woman reaches menopause, there is a sudden drop in estrogen level accounting for decrease in vaginal lubrication and pain during attempts of intercourse; this can also lead to lack of interest for sexual intimacy.

More women seem to be suffering from HSDD than arousal or orgasmic problems. A Western study indicates the prevalence of women suffering from lack of desire (32% – 37%) as compared to orgasmic problems (24.1%) and trouble lubricating (18.8%).

What can be done about it?

Simple lifestyle modifications, stress management, weight reduction, physical fitness, changing the monotony and measures to spice up the companionship are useful. Improving communications and strengthening interpersonal relationship and intimacy with the partner will also improve desire as well as the arousal response. Talk to your husband freely about your interests and aversions and what turns you on and what puts you off during foreplay. Warm up to the occasion and increase your arousal and fantasies during foreplay and intercourse. Do not rush for the 'main course'. Achieving good sexual arousal will help you to reach orgasm. Avoid sexual intimacy on a day you are very tired or preoccupied. You may also wish to seek professional help from a gynaecologist.

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> Q6 | Not Interested in Sex

I have been married for three years, and my sexual relationship with my husband has been quite healthy. But in the past two months or so, I have noticed that I have been slowly losing interest in having sex with him. I find having sex a chore rather than something I enjoy these days, and there are times where I'm doing it only because my husband wants to, and not because I want to or because I'm enjoying it. My husband tries his best to make it enjoyable for me, and we do indulge in foreplay before intercourse, but it's just been more difficult to arouse me. I feel very apologetic towards my husband because of this. What could the reason be for my drop in sex drive, and what can be done about it?

