

# NOT TONIGHT DARLING...

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A loss of sexual desire affects most people at some time in their lives. Rebecca Mwanda spoke to health researcher Sue Visser.

"I'll go to any lengths to avoid going to bed at the same time as my husband," Deborah admits. "I love snuggling up to him, but I dread it when he wants to get more intimate. It's not that I don't love him anymore, I really just don't feel like having sex at all."

"Sex is an important part of a relationship," confirms health researcher

Sue Visser, "it isn't everything, but a lack of libido can cause problems."

Deborah certainly isn't alone – there are many women and men who feel the same way from time to time. Fatigue is one of the most important reasons why we lose that loving feeling and the once powerful flame of desire seems to flicker, but there are other causes too.

• **HORMONAL IMBALANCES** – "When women are on hormone replacement therapy or the pill, they have libido problems," Sue explains. "The thyroid begins to function less efficiently, which also makes women feel generally lethargic, which influences the libido."

A homeopathic medicine called *Agnus Castus* (also known as chasteberry or monk's pepper) is good for balancing both men and women's levels of sexual desire.

• **ODOUR PROBLEMS** – "Bad breath or unpleasant smells between the legs can be off-putting. A big bunch of parsley eaten every day helps the top end. And avoiding washing in alkaline soap can help prevent other odour problems."

• **NUTRITION** – a lack of vitamin E and essential fatty acids can be a factor. Take a teaspoon of sunflower seeds or cod liver oil every day to boost those levels.

• **STRESS** – "Having a family and work demanding your attention can result in a lack of time and enthusiasm for sex," says Sue. "When men are under stress they want to breed, but women want to nest. I suggest that people think of sex as a remedy for stress, a way to relax."

• **COMMUNICATION** – "There has to be an ongoing closeness," says Sue. "Women like to be cuddled. It's a slow process. Women give sex for companionship, men give companionship for sex. There may also be other unresolved matters from childhood or previous relationships that come out in the bedroom. Seek professional help, but above all, try to keep your sense of humour."

• **HEALTH** – circulation problems or low blood pressure can cause challenges. Make sure you're taking the right balance of B vitamins, plus extra B5. Cutting down on junk food and emphasising healthy food like vegetables, low-fat milk products and seafood. Ginkgo biloba and olive leaf products help improve the circulation too.

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