

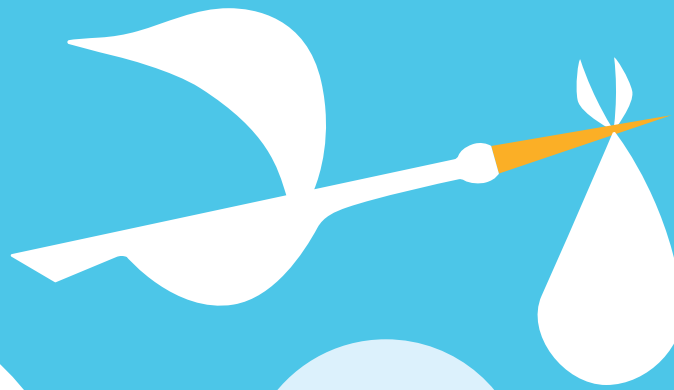
Below The Beltway™

A SEXUAL MEDICINE NEWSLETTER



JULY 2020

The Stork Doesn't Bring The Baby



It's past both Mother's Day and Father's Day. Nearly all mothers and fathers, became parents because they had sex. I know, some had artificial insemination, and some had IVF, some children were adopted, but most parents had sex, that means sexual intercourse. Most children and grandchildren of a certain age know it, but the thought of mom and dad, or worse, grandma and grandpa rolling around in the hay, evokes comments like "oh my goodness, that's gross!" Right? Well, get used to the idea. We are all living longer and healthier lives. As a result, the principle issues affecting sexual activity in aging couples: sexual desire, sexual pain, and other physical limitations, are becoming non-issues given our current states of good health, and advances in medicine.

As a point of reference, a survey done in 2003 reported that more than 20% of 60-94-year olds were sexually active.¹ Those findings are consistent with more recent data (2007) documenting that greater than 40% of 81-85-year olds are still sexually active if they were in very good or excellent health.² And that's not just sex on a special occasion (Mother's Day, Father's Day, or a birthday) either. In 75-85-year olds, 23% of sexually active couples were having sex once a week or more, and 54% of this same group were having sex 2-3 times a month!² So why then did the April/May 2020 issue of AARP-The Magazine, The World's Largest-Circulation Magazine, representing huge numbers of American men and women over age 50, fail to mention sex, AT ALL, in their



SPECIAL 2020 Health and Happiness Issue? Inside that SPECIAL edition, a story titled: “21 Crucial Health Tests for your 60+ Body”, failed to include anything about sex or sexual function. That article discussed Muscles & Bones and Exercise; The Digestive System; Skin, Hair and Nails; as well as Heart, Lungs and Circulation. yet not a single word about sex. Now, I get it, as mentioned above, it’s not particularly fashionable to think about 60+ year olds having sex. But keep in mind that sex is good exercise, burning about 500 calories/h, more than walking at 4 miles/h, but less than running at 6 miles/h. Admittedly, it might not be a fair comparison. It is a rare couple that can sustain sexual activity for that long. Nevertheless, sex is good exercise.

In yet another glaring omission, the AARP article did not mention the genitourinary (GU) tract at all! Let’s face it, everyone urinates. Most of us do it about 6 times a day, and if you drink a lot of water (as suggested), it will be 10 times a day or more especially for us with 60+ year-old plumbing. Prostate health, bladder health, vaginal health, not a single word mentioned. Thankfully, the entire issue wasn’t a total bust. It also featured Marlo Thomas and Phil Donahue excerpting their new book: *What Makes a Marriage Last: 40 Celebrated Couples Share with Us the Secrets to a Happy Life*.³ They mention 7 couples from their book: Robin Dearden/Bryan Cranston, Viola Davis/Julius Tennon, Tracy Pollan/Michael J. Fox, Neil Patrick Harris/David Burtka, Justine and John Leguizamo, Joanna and Chip Gaines, and Kyra Sedgwick/Kevin Bacon. Of those mentioned, it was only Bacon who noted the importance of sex in maintaining a long-term relationship when he quipped jokingly: “Whenever people ask us how we’ve stayed married, I’ve started saying, ‘Keep the fights clean and the sex dirty’. I felt like that would just end the conversation.” End the conversation? That should be the starting place!

Sexual health is a significant part of general health. A satisfying sexual relationship leads to a better relationship overall, improved life satisfaction, enhanced mental and physical health, more happiness and longer life. There is even one study showing that if a couple has a lot of sex, they are likely to make more money. If you have personal concerns, You talk, I’ll listen, we’ll plan together.

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