

## Regional Psychosexual Service at Brackenburn Clinic

### Glossary of terms

- **Erectile dysfunction** – Erectile dysfunction is a sexual dysfunction characterized by the inability to develop or maintain an erection of the penis. There are various underlying causes, such as physical health issues eg; diabetes or cardiovascular disease, which simply decreases blood flow to the tissue in the penis. Even if the erectile dysfunction is due to a physical issue secondary problems of a psychosexual nature can frequently develop. Or erectile dysfunction can develop due to psychological issues whereby dysfunction is due to predominantly and exclusively psychological or interpersonal factors.  
This can present as an inability to develop or maintain an erection of the penis or premature ejaculation.
- **Vaginismus** – An involuntary spasm of the muscles of the vaginal wall that interferes with penetration or the ability to receive a smear test or other physical health checks. Vaginismus is accompanied with severe pain.
- **Dyspaerunia** – May be caused by insufficient lubrication (vaginal dryness) in women. Poor lubrication may result from insufficient excitement and stimulation, or from hormonal changes caused by the menopause, pregnancy, or breast feeding. Irritation from contraceptive creams and foams can also cause dryness, as can fear, trauma, anxiety and performance anxiety about sex.
- **Libido** – Known as sex drive, is a person's overall sexual drive or desire for sexual activity. Sex drive is influenced by biological, psychological and social factors.
- **Orgasm** – Widely regarded as the peak of sexual excitement.
- **Vulva** – The external genitals of the female, including the labia, majora, labia minora, clitoris and vestibule of the vagina

---

### For more information contact:

Brackenburn Clinic  
Shimna House, Knockbracken Healthcare Park  
Saintfield Road, Belfast, BT8 8BH

Tel. (028) 9063 8854

Email: [BrackenburnClinic@belfasttrust.hscni.net](mailto:BrackenburnClinic@belfasttrust.hscni.net)