

ROAD

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Our sex lives are back on track!

Vaginal dryness can be a crippling symptom of the menopause. These two readers reveal how they overcame their intimate problems – and will never look back!

'I feel 18 again!'

Debbie Mellowship, 54, from Hertfordshire

Falling back on to the pillows, my husband Gary and I looked at each other and started to laugh. After almost 10 years of not being able to have sex, we had finally done it – and it was amazing!

Our problems had begun when I went into early menopause at 41. As well as hot flushes and night sweats, by the age of 45 I was also suffering from terrible vaginal atrophy – a thinning and drying of the vaginal tissue caused by a lack of oestrogen.

Having sex was incredibly painful. My skin would rip and

I'd bleed afterwards. I tried everything – HRT, aqueous gels, lubricants and special pessaries – but nothing worked. Although Gary was very supportive, it did put a strain on our relationship. We had always enjoyed a healthy sex life – now I felt fed up and old before my time.

I had almost given up hope when, last year, I stumbled across a treatment called Mona Lisa Touch at the private hospital where I work.

The treatment uses a CO2 fractional laser to boost collagen cells and rebuild vaginal skin, easing symptoms of dryness, itching, soreness,

inflammation and thinning. It cost £3,000, but you only get one shot at life.

Each treatment was six weeks apart and after the second one, I started to notice a real difference. You have to refrain from sex for two days afterwards and although I was a little apprehensive at first, once we got into it, it was fine.

I felt so excited and couldn't wait for the final session. After that third treatment, I just couldn't believe it. I was totally back to normal. I now feel more confident and feminine again, and life is brilliant. It's changed my life. I feel 18 again!

• takeoutthepause.co.uk



Debbie had laser treatment

'It put a strain on our relationship'



Is your sex life on hold?

Take The Pause Out Of Menopause surveyed 500 menopausal women with vaginal dryness. Here are the shock findings...

- Half of women say it negatively affects their body confidence, and a quarter claim it leaves them feeling less attractive.
- 28% report the condition leaves them feeling irritable and depressed.
- A fifth of women have lost hope of finding a treatment.
- 30% are worried about the long-term impact it could have on their relationship.

'There's help if you need it'

Sara Carson, 51, from London

Being diagnosed with breast cancer in 2010 was a terrible shock. I was only 44 and felt like my life had been wiped out from under me.

It was a traumatic time and more so when the treatment forced my body into early menopause. The symptoms were bearable at first but three years ago I started to suffer from vaginal atrophy.

A certain spot just inside my vagina became incredibly painful. So much so, I couldn't even touch it with the tip of my little finger. When I went to the toilet I had to dab myself dry.

My husband Mike was very supportive. We'd met in 2006 and married a year after my diagnosis.

'It doesn't matter,' he told me. 'I love you, stop worrying.' But for me it was about losing the closeness. I felt I'd been robbed of my vitality and sexuality.

I went to see three different GPs and a cancer nurse, but nothing they recommended worked.

Desperate for a solution, I looked online. At first I was put off by headlines about 'Designer Vaginas' but eventually I came across Nu-Y. It's a laser treatment that plumps up the skin and encourages it to moisturise itself again to help with soreness, dryness, incontinence and sexual dysfunction. Three



Sara's life has changed

treatments cost £1,000. 'I think it's worth a punt,' I told Mike. 'If it works, it will change my life.'

At the first appointment I was a nervous wreck and was dosed up with painkillers, but I needn't have worried. I hardly felt a thing.

Within five days I couldn't believe the difference! It was a miracle. I

'I felt I'd been robbed of my sexuality'

managed to try all the medical dilators and when I reached the biggest size I was jumping up and down on the bed. I was so

excited! Poor Mike didn't know what had hit him. When we had sex I didn't need to stop to get lubes or painkillers. It was fabulous.

Since then I've had a second treatment and things are better still. I haven't had the third treatment yet as I don't feel I need it, but I won't hesitate in the future if I do.

I want everyone to know about this treatment. There is light at the end of the tunnel. It's so amazing.

● genesis.clinic

DIY solutions

Worried about vaginal dryness? These at-home treatments may help...

● In2Mate is a gentle skincare range designed to repair, rejuvenate and lubricate delicate skin, and slow down the ageing process. The full range costs £19.95, in2mate.co.uk.



● vSculpt uses therapeutic red and infrared LED light emitters, heat and sonic vibration to gently tone and strengthen the pelvic floor and rejuvenate vaginal tissue. From £375, vsulpt.com.

