

## Powerful Patient 2009 week 8

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### Wellness and Sex

In honor of Valentine's Day, Joyce talks with Joel Keehn, Senior Health Editor at Consumer Reports. Their poll of 1000 Americans in January 2008 revealed that 80% of sexually active Americans put off sex because they are too sick or tired.



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#### 1) About Our Guest

Joel Keehn is Senior Health Editor at Consumer Reports. The Consumer Reports National Research Center conducted a random-digit-dialing telephone survey of a nationally representative probability sample of telephone households. In all, 1000 interviews were completed among adults aged 18+. Interviews took place January 8<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> and January 15<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup>, 2009. The margin of error is +/- 3% points at a confidence level of 95%.

Visit [www.ConsumerReportsHealth.org](http://www.ConsumerReportsHealth.org) for more information about the sex poll, the Consumer Reports sex education quiz, or to read "Healthy Sex: His and Hers."

#### 2) About the Study

More than eight out of ten sexually active adults have put off having sex in the past year. Their reasons? Eight percent say they're too sick or too tired for sex. And forty percent say they're just plain "not in the mood." Other top reasons include taking care of children and pets (30%) and working (29%).

Of Americans who are sexually active, 78% say the economic crisis hasn't had an affect on the amount of time they spend in the bedroom.

The nationally representative poll, which included 1,000 U.S. residents, was conducted by the Consumer Reports National Research Center. Here are some of the key findings, plus tips for sleepy Americans.

- Of those who said they were sexually active, turns out a little planning goes a long way. Forty-five percent told *Consumer Reports* they've planned a time to have sex with their partner. And seven percent of this group used an electronic calendar, PDA, or smart phone to do so.

- Twenty percent of this group also said they missed work to keep an appointment for sex. Thirteen percent said they missed out on time with the kids and nine percent cancelled a doctor's appointment.
- Asked about Valentines Day, 47% of Americans said President Obama should stay focused on national priorities, such as the economic crisis gripping the nation, while 45% said he should reserve time to be with the First Lady.
- Nearly half of U.S. adults will spend less money this Valentine's Day but 80% say the economic crisis has caused no change in how often they have sex.
- And there continues to be an apparent disconnect between men and women when it comes to sex. Nearly 60 percent of the sexually active men polled by *Consumer Reports* said they think about sex at least once a day, compared with only 19 percent of sexually active women.
- Overall, a similar percentage of men and women seem to be satisfied with their sex lives. Specifically, sixty-six percent of men and 58% of women told *Consumer Reports* they were satisfied with their sex lives.

### **Can Sex-Enhancing Drugs Help?**

For couples who want to put the spark back in their sex lives, *Consumer Reports* suggests several tips online at <http://www.consumerreportshealth.org/>. *Consumer Reports* also weighs in on the use of sex-enhancing drugs such as Viagra, Cialis, and Levitra. "These drugs can be helpful to some but we urge consumers to be skeptical of a growing belief that all sexual problems can be cured by popping a pill," says Dr. Orly Avitzur, medical adviser at *Consumer Reports*. According to Dr. Avitzur, doctors are now prescribing these drugs in response to huge advertising budgets. In 2007, the makers of the three drugs listed above spent \$300 million on advertising to consumers.

Should women use Viagra? *Consumer Reports* recommends trying other measures first for several reasons, noted online in a report about Viagra for women. See <http://www.consumerreports.org/health/medical-conditions-treatments/sex-poll/viagra-and-women/sex-poll-viagra-and-women.htm>

### **3) About Sleep**

Everyone needs sleep. If you are feeling too tired for sex, start by scheduling 7-8 hours of sleep every night for a week, and see what difference that makes. The effects of too little sleep are subtle, and you may not realize what an impact that alone is having on your moods, your efficiency at work, the quality of your thinking, and your interactions with others around you. Try this change before considering any medical or other approach.

Can't find time to sleep? That can be a vicious cycle. If your fatigue is making you inefficient at work, that could be one reason why you can't find time to sleep.

New baby? Or is caring for a loved one making it impossible to get enough hours of sleep in a row? Sleep when your baby sleeps, hire a babysitter or share childcare with another parent so you can take a nap. Share duty times with your partner so that you get adequate sleep, at least occasionally.

Consumer Reports did a study on sleep in summer 2008, which we reported in show number 08-32. See [http://www.powerfulpatient.org/archive/2008/0832\\_sleep.php](http://www.powerfulpatient.org/archive/2008/0832_sleep.php)