Castration effects [1]

Dear Alice,

When a man is castrated, does he lose all senses of the urge to have sex? Or, is it that he loses all ejaculation, but the urges are still there?

Answer

Dear Reader,

Castration usually means removal of the testicles, which is where the male sex hormone, testosterone, is produced. At various times in history and in various cultures, boys have been castrated to serve as religious figures or servants, or to keep their singing voices in the upper register. These castrated boys are often called eunuchs or castrati. When a boy hasn't gone through puberty yet, castration will result in a less muscular frame, underdeveloped genitalia, lack of body hair, and a voice that doesn't change or deepen.

Castration can occur by accident (e.g. war injuries, pelvic crushing from auto accidents, severe burns, etc.), as a form of torture, punishment, or self-mutilation, or be the result of surgery, perhaps for a medical condition such as testicular cancer or prostate cancer. Some medicines that treat prostate cancer result in "pharmacologic castration," because they prevent the production of testosterone. Some courts have ordered men who are habitually sexually abusive to undergo injections of medications to stop testosterone production, hoping that this measure will prevent these men from continuing to sexually abuse others.

At first, a man who has been castrated will still have a sexual urge. Over time, however, because he's no longer producing testosterone, he'll lose much of his libido or sexual desire. Medications can readjust the chemicals in his blood and bring back some sexual desire. Studies have also been done that show with increased stimulation, a castrated man can actually get an erection, have sex, and orgasm (although ejaculate which would be minimal in volume and not contain any sperm).

Alice!

Category:
Sexual & Reproductive Health [2]
Miscellaneous [3]

Related questions
Lowered testosterone levels reduce sexual desire in women? [4]
What are testicles for? [5]
Will just one testicle tamper with sex life and fatherhood? [6]
Low sexual desire [7]
Published date:
Mar 22, 2002
Last reviewed on:
Jul 28, 2015

Go Ask Alice! is not an emergency or instant response service.
If you are in an urgent situation, please visit our Emergency page to view a list of 24 hour support services and hotlines.

Source URL: http://www.goaskalice.columbia.edu/answered-questions/castration-effects#comment-0

Links