

## More Senior Citizens Maintaining an Active Sex Life

By Fritz Esker  
Special to the NNPA  
from the *Louisiana Weekly*

The month of May is designated “Older Americans” Month. This little-known designation is not new. Initially established by President John F. Kennedy in 1963, the month exists to highlight a variety of important issues for the United States’ older population.

One such topic is sex. And for older Americans, more and more are enjoying an active love life well into their golden years.

According to Dudley Danoff, MD, an author and expert in the field of urology, the increase in sexual intercourse in older Americans can be attributed to a number of factors. Top on the list is that more Americans are living longer.

Danoff, who began his practice over 40 years ago, says that initially he saw on average one patient a month who was 100 years of age or older. Now, he says he averages two to three such patients in a week.

However, an increase in older Americans is not the only reason for the spike. In years past, men who lived long lives often had physical obstacles to engaging in intercourse. But with the advent of medications like Viagra, Cialis, Levitra, etc., a greater number of male senior citizens are able to enjoy an active sex life.

Danoff believes this is a positive trend. Many Americans still believe that sex is something for the young (or at least middle-aged). But Danoff said that if a person is healthy enough to get out

of bed, do some simple exercises, and take a few steps, then he or she can have sex.

“You don’t stop having sex because you get older,” Danoff said. “If you stop having sex, then you get older.”

There are, of course, challenges and obstacles for older people having sex. It can take a longer time for a man to get an erection and may be more difficult to maintain it. A man may require a longer time in between sexual encounters before being able to achieve orgasm again. Medications can help with these problems.

Part of the issue stems from the testosterone loss that men suffer from after age 40, about one percent per year. Danoff says men should be cautious in pursuing testosterone supplements, though, because it might increase a patient’s risk for prostate cancer. This is especially



achieve erection and climax too quickly. This isn’t as much of an issue in old age.

Older Americans often have more time that they can devote to sex. If their

important, Dr. Danoff believes there is another, more important factor.

“Above all, you have to have a sense of humor and realistic expectation,”

age, it can be more tempting for seniors to forego protection during sex. According to statistics from the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals, HIV diagnoses in older Louisianians went up from 2010-2011 (2011 is the most recent year the DHH has compiled the relevant stats).

For Louisianians aged 65 and over, the number climbed from 13 in 2010 to 18 in 2011. In the 55-64 age bracket, the number rose from 66 in 2010 to 78 in 2011. The age 45-54 demographic went up from 207 in 2010 to 232 in 2011. However, it should be noted that every age group in Louisiana except 0-12 saw

an increase in HIV diagnoses from 2010 to 2011.

Danoff said there are no unique precautions seniors must take to prevent sexually transmitted diseases. Those having sex in a monogamous relationship should be worry-free, but those engaging in higher-risk intercourse should still use condoms.

“If you are engaging in high-risk sex at any age, you are exposing yourself to the risk of HIV and AIDS,” said Dr. Danoff.

*This article originally published in the April 20, 2015 print edition of The Louisiana Weekly newspaper.*

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Dudley Danoff, MD

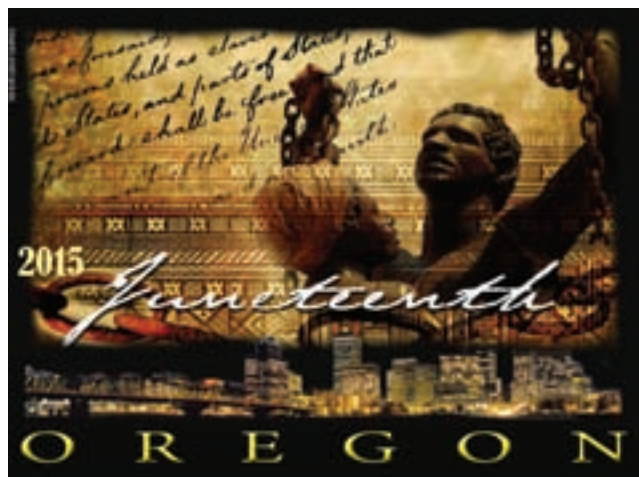
pertinent for African-American men, who are already at higher risk for the disease. Patients should consult a urologist before taking supplements.

On the other hand, older age opens up a variety of opportunities in the bedroom, too. Danoff said the necessity of longer foreplay can be positive. He said many younger patients complain to him that they

children are out of the house, they’re less likely to have interruptions or other obligations when they’re at home. If they’re retired, they have even more time available without a job commitment. But while time is

Danoff said.

But with more sexual activity, there are also increased risks for sexually transmitted diseases in older demographics. With the possibility of pregnancy disappearing after a certain



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