

# PSSD: What Parents Should Know

## Post-SSRI (Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitor) Sexual Dysfunction

**PSSD** is a condition that affects some people after they stop taking antidepressants. It can change sexual feelings, emotions, or senses. This often happens with drugs like **SSRIs** and **SNRIs**. Not everyone gets it — but it's important to understand because most patients are never told it exists.

### 1. What is PSSD?

PSSD occurs when some antidepressants lead to lasting changes in the body. These changes can persist even after stopping the medication. It affects three main areas:

- Sexual function
- Emotions and feelings
- Thinking and senses

Symptoms can last for months or longer. For some, they fade; for others, they may continue.

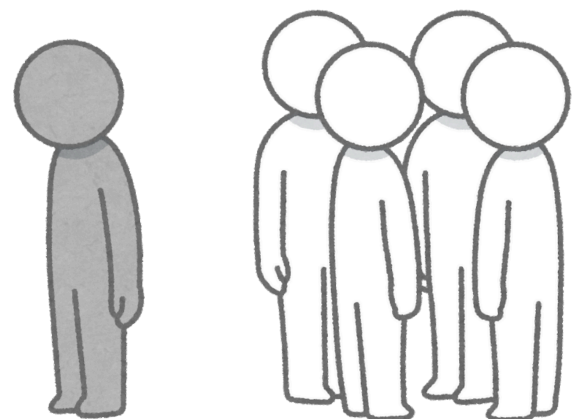
### 2. Common Symptoms

#### Sexual Symptoms

- Low or no interest in sex or relationships
- Genital numbness or decreased feeling in the groin
- Trouble in becoming aroused
- Difficulty in having an orgasm

#### Emotional + Cognitive Symptoms

- Feeling “emotionally flat” or numb
- Not feeling excitement, fear, joy, or love in the same way
- Trouble concentrating or remembering things
- Feeling disconnected from yourself and others



### 3. What medications can cause it?

Antidepressants (SSRIs, SNRIs) often block the reuptake of serotonin (a neurotransmitter). This means serotonin stays in the brain longer than usual.

- **SSRIs:** Zoloft (sertraline), Prozac (fluoxetine), Paxil (paroxetine), Lexapro (escitalopram), Celexa (citalopram), Trintellix (vortioxetine)
- **SNRIs:** Effexor (venlafaxine), Pristiq (desvenlafaxine), Cymbalta (duloxetine)

PSSD can appear:

- while taking the medication
- during tapering
- or only after stopping it

### 4. How Common Is It?

Sexual side effects are common with SSRIs or SNRIs. Some people notice changes in their interest in sex. They may find it hard to enjoy sex. They might also feel changes in genital sensations.

How long these changes last after stopping the medication can vary a lot. For many people, things slowly return to normal. For others, the symptoms continue longer than expected – this may be PSSD.

We don't know the exact number of people affected because:

- many people don't report these symptoms,
- doctors may not recognize PSSD, and
- researchers haven't conducted large-scale studies yet

### 5. Why This Matters

Many parents don't know all of the long-term effects of antidepressants. Starting SSRIs in childhood may affect future relationships and sexual behavior. There is no known cure for PSSD.

This information isn't meant to worry you. Our goal is to give families clear and honest details before they decide on long-term medical care. When parents know the benefits and risks, they can better support their child. They can ask good questions and make choices that match their values and their child's future wellbeing.

### 6. Where Can I Go To Learn More?

For more info, personal stories, and science references, visit the PSSD Network at [pssdnetwork.org](https://pssdnetwork.org). It's a patient-led site for education and support.

You can also visit [Rxisk.org](https://Rxisk.org) to learn more about PSSD and report symptoms.