



# Primary Care Management of Erectile Dysfunction

Version 2.4 – February 2025

# Introduction



VERSION CONTROL		
1.0	08/10/15	First version agreed at LMMG
1.1	14 <sup>th</sup> April	Updated with tadalafil daily commissioning position
1.2.	26/7/17	Updated to include Invicorp - Reserved for patients not responding or intolerant to Alprostadil, as an option before referral for surgical procedure (section 4.3.3)
2.0	May 2021	Complete review and revision of contents. Pathways condensed and updated. AG.
2.1	September 2023	Added invicorp® and avanafil position updated
2.2	July 2024	Addition of daily tadalafil 5mg
2.3	December 2024	Clarification that daily tadalafil may be initiated in primary care
2.4	February 2025	Change from referral to mental health services to referral to psychosexual service and removed need for specialist initiation of tadalafil in prostatectomy patients

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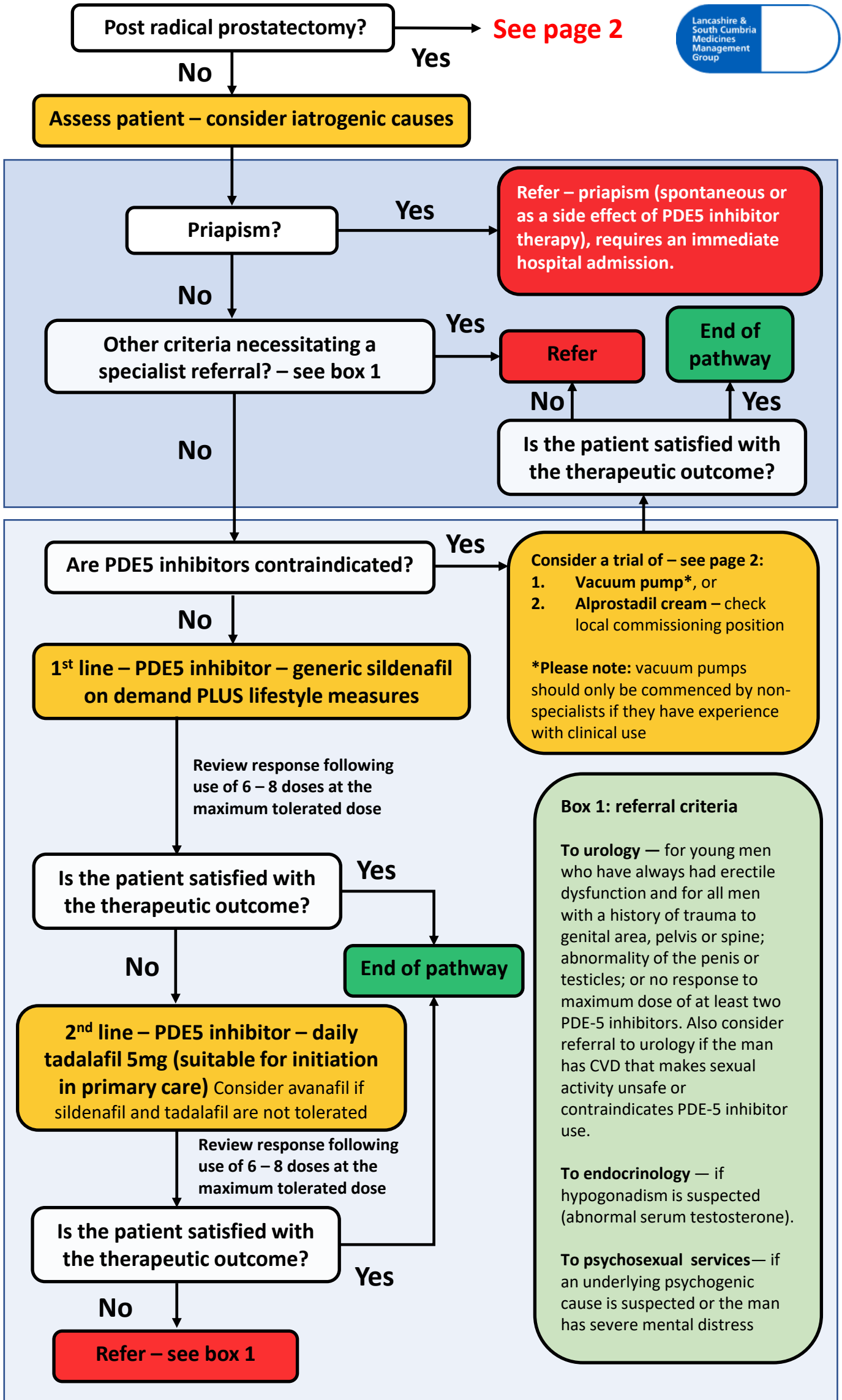
1. Primary care management of erectile dysfunction pathway
2. Supporting information: post radical prostatectomy and alternatives to PDE5 inhibitors
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# Primary Care Management of Erectile Dysfunction



# Primary Care Management of Erectile Dysfunction: Supporting Information

## Post radical prostatectomy

Erectile dysfunction is a common complication following prostatectomy due to cavernosal nerve damage, causing hypoxia, apoptosis, venous leak and fibrosis of the corpora cavernosa. Although there is evidence that, following an initial loss of erectile function, spontaneous improvements will occur in a proportion of men without specific intervention, most men who undergo radical treatment for prostate cancer experience erectile dysfunction and this can be a cause of significant distress.

### **NICE NG131 (Prostate cancer: diagnosis and management) recommends:**

#### Sexual dysfunction

1.3.33 Offer people who have had radical treatment for prostate cancer access to specialist erectile dysfunction services. [2008, amended 2014]

1.3.34 Offer people with prostate cancer who experience loss of erectile function phosphodiesterase type 5 (PDE5) inhibitors to improve their chance of spontaneous erections. [2008]

1.3.35 If PDE5 inhibitors do not restore erectile function or are contraindicated, offer people vacuum devices, intraurethral inserts or penile injections, or penile prostheses as an alternative. [2008]

Within the Lancashire Health Economy, it is recommended that patients are treated with generic sildenafil 1st line post-prostatectomy (unless PDE5 inhibitors are considered inappropriate).

Tadalafil 5mg may be used as a 2nd line PDE5 inhibitor post-prostatectomy. Tadalafil 2.5mg should only be used when 5mg is not tolerated.

## Alternatives to PDE5 inhibitors

Several treatments for erectile dysfunction are available in secondary care, although none are as convenient or well tolerated as PDE-5 inhibitors.

**Vacuum erection devices** are recommended as **first-line alternative treatment** in well-informed older men with infrequent sexual intercourse and comorbidity requiring non-invasive, drug-free management of erectile dysfunction. They are reported to be highly effective with variable satisfaction.

Referral to a specialist may be required for assessment and treatment initiation. In this instance the specialist should provide the initial device as cost is included in the treatment tariff.

**Choice of Vacuum Pump:** Only CE marked devices listed in the [Drug Tariff Part IXA](#) are prescribable on NHS prescription.

**In the absence of trial data or evidence of individual device effectiveness. Choice should be based on costs and prescriber or organisational satisfaction of the device safety and effectiveness.**

**Second line treatments** include alprostadil, available in the UK as an intracavernous injection (Caverject®, Viridal®), an intraurethral application (MUSE®), and a topical cream (Vitaros®). These can be effective treatments in men with erectile dysfunction following a spinal cord injury or after major pelvic surgery. Aviptadil / Phentolamine Mesilate Injection (Invicorp®) has been reviewed by LSCMMG for the symptomatic treatment of erectile dysfunction in adult males due to neurogenic, vasculogenic, psychogenic, or mixed aetiology and is RAG rated 'Amber 0'.

Penile prosthesis is a third-line treatment considered for men whose erectile dysfunction has an organic cause and who fail to respond to pharmacotherapy or who prefer a permanent solution to erectile dysfunction.

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## Qualifying for an NHS prescription

Generic sildenafil can be prescribed without restriction on the NHS.

Viagra<sup>®</sup>, tadalafil (Cialis<sup>®</sup>) and vardenafil (Levitra<sup>®</sup>), and avanafil (Spedra<sup>®</sup>) are not prescribable on an NHS prescription except for men who:

- Have diabetes, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease, poliomyelitis, prostate cancer, severe pelvic injury, single-gene neurological disease (for example Huntington's disease), spina bifida, or spinal cord injury.
- Are receiving renal dialysis for renal failure.
- Have had radical pelvic surgery, prostatectomy (including transurethral resection of the prostate), or a kidney transplant.
- Were receiving Caverject<sup>®</sup>, Erecnos<sup>®</sup>, MUSE<sup>®</sup>, Uprima<sup>®</sup>, Viagra<sup>®</sup>, Cialis<sup>®</sup>, or Viridal<sup>®</sup> at the expense of the NHS on 14 September 1998.

In addition, specialist centres can prescribe phosphodiesterase-5 (PDE-5) inhibitors on the NHS if the man is 'suffering severe distress as a result of impotence' that causes:

- Significant disruption to normal social and occupational activities.
- A marked effect on mood, behaviour, social, and environmental awareness.
- A marked effect on interpersonal relationships.

## Quantity of PDE5 inhibitors to supply on NHS prescription

For most men, as-required treatment with a phosphodiesterase-5 (PDE-5) inhibitor is suitable. The frequency of treatment will need to be considered on an individual basis.

The Health Service Circular: Treatment for impotence recommends one treatment a week on the NHS, based on research evidence that the frequency of sexual intercourse in the 40–60 age range is once a week. However, if the GP considers that more than one treatment a week is appropriate, this can be prescribed on the NHS.

## Private prescriptions

For those NHS patients not meeting NHS criteria (excluding those prescribed generic sildenafil) a private prescription should be provided.

These should be free of a prescription writing charge. Repeats can be provided on a private prescription. The cost of the medication will be determined by the dispensing pharmacy.