Supportive Positioning for Sexual Activity

When choosing a sexual position, you want to make sure it is comfortable, balanced and safe for you and your partner.

1. Sidelying Positions:

You and your partner may experiment with lying on either side and adjusting pillow placements as needed for maximum comfort:

- Lying on your stronger side:
  - Comfortable position, especially if you have a painful hemiplegic shoulder. Place pillows under your hemiplegic hand/forearm for support.
  - You can place a pillow under the hemiplegic leg to minimize pain in the hip/knee
- Lying on your hemiplegic side:
  - Position yourself so you are lying more on your shoulder blade, not directly on your shoulder.

2. One Partner on Top:

Expermient with top and bottom positions as able.

- As the bottom partner:
  - Back comfort: Pillows under your lower back and/or knees for comfort when lying on your back. Or place a pillow under hips if lying on your stomach.
  - Lower extremity tone: A wedge pillow placed under you knees can help decrease tone, leg spasms and back pain when lying on your back.
  - Arm positioning when lying on your back: Place pillows under your hemiplegic hand/forearm for support.
Arm positioning when lying on your stomach: If you have a painful hemiplegic arm, position your hand flat against mattress/lying surface and elbow tucked into your side (as shown in Image D). Alternatively, you can also position your arm straight against your side body (hand on side of leg).

- Head position: turn to look towards whichever side is more comfortable.

As the top partner:

- If assuming the top position, you will require strength in your trunk, legs and arms. You may choose to be on your hands and knees if strength allows, or knees and forearms.

3. Seated in Chair or wheelchair:
- Seated in stable chair or wheelchair. Advised to position the chair with the back against a wall for increased safety and stability.
- Using a chair without armrests or removing armrests from the wheelchair will offer more options for positioning.
- Either partner can be in the seated position.
- If you have a painful hip, placing a pillow between your legs. Likewise, for a painful shoulder or hemiplegic arm, support your arm on an arm board, pillow, or use a sling to keep your arm against your body.
This handout is meant to be a brief overview of examples of sexual positions for you and your partner. Participate in these activities at your own risk. Talk to your doctor, health or rehabilitation professional if you have any additional questions or concerns. We advise that you have a complete medical examination and are aware of the medications you are on that could impact your sexual or cardiac function prior to engaging in sexual activities following your Brain Injury. Neurological Rehabilitation holds monthly education sessions to discuss sexual health and brain injury that everybody is welcome to attend. You can find a schedule of sessions posted in the Neuro Rehab unit (3EC) or in Rehab Plus. You can also call the Neuro Rehab unit at 416-243-3600, ext 4130 to find out the time and date. For more details on additional positions, products and devices please refer to some of these helpful resources: