

# Connecting between the sheets The Wellness Show wrapping up today

**QUESTION:**

My wife and I have been married for seven years. We used to have great sex but as the years have passed we have less and less. She is a good mother and is very focused on our home but I feel left out and no longer attractive to her. Sometimes I think that my only purpose is to provide the family income. When I complain she gets annoyed and is even less available. How can I deal with my frustration?



we hope for in a marriage. However sex, like the canary in the mine shaft, is often the first casualty when tensions in a marriage mount.

Here are a few thoughts. First: can you get curious about what has changed for you emotionally over the past few years? You suspect that your wife no longer finds you attractive. Who were you when you and your wife were having great sex? Try to find that person again. It is very easy to lose who we are in our efforts to support a marriage and a young family.

Second: when a wife becomes a mother, a big piece of her energy naturally shifts to the care of her children, and often that means she has less energy for her husband. Try not to take this too personally. The shift in her attention may be less about you and more about her fatigue and her concern for your offspring.

Third: can you get your focus off sex and onto something else? Managing that testosterone drum beat takes some determination but we do not have to be a slave to our primitive drives. Pursuing your wife for sex when tensions are up will only increase her distancing. Something lies beneath this pattern that needs addressing and present-

ing your concerns to your wife in a calm and thoughtful manner might open an important dialogue.

A few decades ago, sex was rarely mentioned in public. Today, it is everywhere. We are all supposed to have good sex and plenty of it, just like in the movies. Cars, cologne, food, furniture and even business deals are described as sexy. Twelve-year-old girls dress suggestively, 16-year-olds get breast implants for their birthdays and women get testosterone injections to improve their libido. There is, in my view, an over-focus on sex and an under-focus on the importance of addressing the challenges that keep relationships honest, open and equal. The male sex drive is often strong enough to be less affected by marital tensions than is the female's, but it is the person in the marriage who wants less sex that determines how much sex there will be. Stay cool and look deeper for connection.

*Margaret Anne Speak, M.A., C.C.C., works with couples, individuals, and families from a Bowen Family Systems perspective at Family Services of the North Shore. Questions? Write onthecouch@familyservices.bc.ca or call 604-988-5281.*

**THE 17th annual Wellness Show, a trade and consumer show focusing on all aspects of health and vital living, is coming to a close today in Vancouver.**

According to the show's website, the exhibition, held Feb. 6-8, showcases people, products and services related to the health and wellness industries.

This year's show is featuring more than 280 exhibitors, keynote speakers, demonstrations and special events, all reflecting the most up-to-date information on wellness and healthy living for adults, children and pets.

The show is open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. today at the Vancouver Convention and Exhibition Centre. Tickets: \$12.50/10/5 are available at the door.

Info: [www.thewellnessshow.com](http://www.thewellnessshow.com).

## health notes

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**Canadian Federation of University Women-North Vancouver:** Dr. Gary Jackson, will speak about instituting an umbilical cord blood bank in B.C. at the club's meeting on Thursday, Feb. 12, 7 p.m. at the Royal Canadian Legion, 123 West 15th St., North Vancouver. Prospective members welcome. Info: Linda 604-929-7500.

**Dementia Education Series:** Information on Alzheimer's disease and related dementias, communication strategies, understanding changes in behav-

iors, future planning, advocacy, legal issues and taking care of yourself, four Thursdays, beginning Feb. 12 or four Saturdays beginning March 14. For registration and information call 604-984-8348 or e-mail [ksutherland@alzheimercbc.org](mailto:ksutherland@alzheimercbc.org).

**Smoking Cessation Clinics:** Learn about the ways to quit smoking and speak with a patient-care pharmacist, Friday, Feb. 13, 10 a.m.-6 p.m., London Drugs, 875 Park Royal North, West Vancouver. For an appointment call: 604-926-9616. Or, Monday, Feb. 16, 11 a.m.-7 p.m. at London

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