

Help men take control of their **sexual health**

Supporting men with EPs in the pharmacy



Sildenafil

Only 25 years ago, men with erection problems (EPs) had only invasive or other unappealing options to choose from to help – and it wasn't a topic they could easily talk about.

Since then, we have moved away from embarrassment and silence, towards conversation and understanding.

There are still barriers to break down but the launch of VIAGRA CONNECT® into pharmacy five years ago has helped break taboos and challenged stigmas around EPs.¹ Pharmacy teams have now joined the conversation on men's sexual health and proven themselves to have a key role in men's wider health and wellbeing, too.

How VIAGRA CONNECT helps meet treatment goals

A hard, rigid erection is a key component of:^{2,3}

- **Sexual satisfaction**
- **Improved wellbeing**
- **Quality of life**

It is a valid treatment goal for customers to look for in their EP medication, and a fully rigid erection has been shown to improve confidence and self-esteem in men.³

The Erection Hardness Score (EHS) is a simple tool that can be used to measure erection hardness.⁴



			
TOFU	PEELED BANANA	UNPEELED BANANA	CUCUMBER
1: Larger but not hard	2: Hard but not hard enough for penetration	3: Hard enough for penetration but not completely hard	4: Completely hard and fully rigid

VIAGRA CONNECT TREATMENT HELPS MEN ACHIEVE GRADE 4 ERECTION HARDNESS.⁵ WHAT DOES GRADE 4 ERECTION HARDNESS MEAN FOR YOUR CUSTOMERS?



24 times more likely to result in successful sexual intercourse compared to grade 3⁶



Associated with the **greatest sexual satisfaction**⁷



Better likelihood of **treatment continuation**⁸

When to consider VIAGRA CONNECT for your customer



Seeking control

Most men (over 80%) taking medication for EPs engage in advanced planning for sexual intercourse.^{9,10}

VIAGRA CONNECT can help men get control back over their sex lives by allowing them to plan for sexual activity. VIAGRA CONNECT can take effect in as little as 25 minutes and can work for up to 4 hours.^{11,12} It contains prescription strength sildenafil 50mg, an ingredient which now has over 25 years of clinical experience behind it.¹³

First time users

VIAGRA CONNECT works. Around 75% of men report improved erections at this dose.¹² It has helped over 1 million men with EPs since it became available OTC.¹⁴

Unless there are any contraindications, this is a good option to consider for first time users who aren't sure what to expect.

Younger users (aged 18 and over)

Younger customers may be struggling with performance anxiety, issues around self-esteem and body image.¹⁹ They may also be affected by stress due to work pressures, or lifestyle pressures such as divorce. VIAGRA CONNECT can help with EPs caused by psychological barriers, until the customer can seek medical help to treat these underlying causes.

*Estimated from reported VIAGRA CONNECT use since launch (Kantar 2019) & UK male population 35+ years.

VICIOUS CYCLE

Remember that EPs can contribute to psychological issues or may be happening as a result of psychological issues. VIAGRA CONNECT can help to break this cycle.



VIAGRA CONNECT allows men to be sexually active every day if they choose to, but they **should not take more than one tablet daily**.¹⁵

How to address potential customer concerns

Could my EPs be related to a more serious problem?

Erectile dysfunction is a marker of increased cardiovascular risk^{16,17} and has been associated with conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes and high cholesterol.¹⁸ Ensure you ask relevant questions and provide appropriate lifestyle advice when applicable to your customer. Remind them to make an appointment with their GP for further investigations within 6 months of starting VIAGRA CONNECT.¹² The sooner long-term conditions are diagnosed the sooner effective treatments can be introduced.

Am I too young to be having EPs?

The prevalence of EPs in men under 40 years may be as high as 25%¹⁹ and can be linked to various factors, including psychological causes.¹⁹ VIAGRA CONNECT is effective in men over 18 years of age who suffer from EPs.¹² In this younger group, erectile dysfunction could be a predictor of cardiovascular disease.²⁰ You can provide support and advice without causing undue concern.

Will I get an erection at an inappropriate time or for longer than needed?

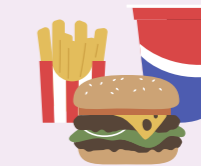
Sexual stimulation is required for VIAGRA CONNECT to work, just taking the tablet will not give them an erection.¹⁵ VIAGRA CONNECT can work for up to 4 hours after taking the dose, but this will not be constant and will subside after sex. If an erection does persist for longer than four hours, the customer should seek urgent medical attention to prevent tissue damage in the penis.

ARE THERE ANY OTHER THINGS I SHOULD KNOW?^{21,25}

Drinking excessive alcohol can impact sexual function. VIAGRA CONNECT should not be taken after excessive drinking as it may be less effective.



VIAGRA CONNECT may take longer to work if taken after a **high-fat meal**



Grapefruit and grapefruit juice may affect the way VIAGRA CONNECT works



Avoid recreational drugs as they can also cause EPs



More learning resources

Visit [pharmacymagazine.co.uk/viagra-connect](https://www.pharmacymagazine.co.uk/viagra-connect) for an extensive range of learning for all knowledge levels, whether new to pharmacy or wanting to refine and develop existing knowledge.



References: 1: Tozzi J and Hopkins JS. 2017. The little blue pill: an oral history of Viagra. [Online.] Available at: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2017-12-11/the-little-blue-pill-an-oral-history-of-viagra?leadSource=verify%20wall>. 2: Claes H, Opsomer R-I, Andrienne R, Vanbelle S, Albert A and Vanderdonck F. Characteristics and expectations of patients with erectile dysfunction: results of the SCORED study. Int J Impot. Res. 2008;20: 418-424. 3: Kaminetsky JC, Depko AJ, Stroberg P, Buvat J, Tseng L-J, Stecher VJ. In men with erectile dysfunction, satisfaction with quality of erections correlates with erection hardness, treatment satisfaction, and emotional well-being. J Sex Med. 2009; 6(3):800-808. 4: Mulhall JP, Goldstein I, Bushmakin AG, Cappelleri JC and Hvidsten K. Validation of the erection hardness score. J Sex Med. 2007; 4(6):1626-1634. 5: Goldstein I, Lue TF, Padma-Nathan H, Rosen RC, Steers WD and Wicker PA. Oral sildenafil in the treatment of erectile dysfunction. N Engl J Med. 1998; 338(20):1397-1404. 6: Goldstein I, Mulhall JP, Bushmakin AG, Cappelleri JC, Hvidsten K, Symonds T. The erection hardness score and its relationship to successful sexual intercourse. J Sex Med 2008; 5:2374-2380. 7: Mulhall J, Althof SE, Brock GB, Goldstein I, Jünnemann K-P and Kirby M. Erectile Dysfunction: Monitoring response to treatment in clinical practice - recommendations of an International Study Panel. J Sex Med. 2007; 4(2):448-464. 8: Mazzola R, Devesi S, Teloken P and Mulhall JP. Exploring the association between erectile rigidity and treatment adherence with sildenafil. J Sex Med. 2013; 10(7):1861-1866. 9: Mulhall JP, Hassan TA and Rienow J. Sexual habits of men with ED who take phosphodiesterase 5 inhibitors: a survey conducted in 7 countries. Int J Clin Pract. 2018; 72:e13074. 10: Goldstein I, Giraldi A, Maculaitis MC, Li VW, Hartzell-Cushman R and Hassan TA. Real-world assessment of the impact of erectile dysfunction on sexual planning behavior and health- and treatment-related outcomes among men in 8 countries. Sex Med. 2020; 8:338e349. 11: Eardley I, Ellis P, Boolell M and Wulff M. Onset and duration of action of sildenafil citrate for the treatment of erectile dysfunction. Br J Clin Pharmacol. 2002; 53:61S-65S. 12: Viagra Connect 50 mg film-coated tablets. SmPC. 2023. 13: NHS. 2022. How and when to take sildenafil. [Online.] Available at: <https://www.nhs.uk/medicines/sildenafil-viagra/how-and-when-to-take-sildenafil/> 14: "Trusted by 1 Million Men." Viatris UK. (Data on file) 15: Pfizer Consumer Healthcare. 2017. Essential information for the supply of Viagra® Connect. 16: Kirby M and Jackson G. Erectile dysfunction as a predictor of coronary artery disease. Trends in Urology & Men's Health. 2011; 2:19-23. 17: Miner M. Erectile dysfunction: a harbinger or consequence: Does its detection lead to a window of curability? J Androl 2011; 32(2):125-34. 18: Nehra A. Erectile dysfunction and cardiovascular disease: efficacy and safety of phosphodiesterase type 5 inhibitors in men with both conditions. Mayo Clin Proc. 2009; 84(2):139-148. 19: Capogrosso, P Colicchia M, Ventimiglia E, Castagna G, Clementi, MC, Suardi N, Castiglione F, Briganti A, Cantello F, Damiano R, Montorsi F and Salonia A. One patient out of four with newly diagnosed erectile dysfunction is a young man - worrisome picture from the everyday clinical practice. J Sex Med 2013; 10:1833-1841. 20: Artom N and Pinna G. The erectile dysfunction as a cardiovascular risk factor. It J Med 2014; 8:210-220. Online sources last accessed March 2023

Name of product: VIAGRA CONNECT® 50 mg Film-coated Tablets

Active ingredient: Sildenafil **Product licence number:** PL 50622/0063 **Name and address of the product licence holder:** Upjohn UK Limited, Ramsgate Road, Sandwich, Kent, CT13 9NJ, UK

Supply classification: P **Indications:** For erectile dysfunction in adult men. **Side Effects:** The safety profile of VIAGRA is based on > 9,000 patients in > 70 double-blind placebo controlled clinical studies. The most commonly reported adverse reactions in clinical studies among sildenafil treated patients were headache, flushing, dyspepsia, nasal congestion, dizziness, nausea, hot flush, visual disturbance, cyanopsia and vision blurred. Adverse reactions from post marketing surveillance has been gathered covering an estimated period >10 years. Because not all adverse reactions are reported to the Marketing Authorisation Holder and included in the safety database, the frequencies of these reactions cannot be reliably determined. Very Common (≥ 1/10): Headache. Common (≥ 1/100 and <1/10): Dizziness, Visual colour distortions (Chloropsia, Chromatopsia, Cyanopsia, Erythropsia and Xanthopsia), Visual disturbance, Vision blurred, Flushing, Hot flush, Nasal congestion, Nausea, Dyspepsia. Uncommon (≥ 1/1,000 and <1/100): Rhinitis, Hypersensitivity; Somnolence; Hypoaesthesia, Lacrimation disorders (Dry eye, Lacrimal disorder and Lacrimation increased), Eye pain, Photophobia, Photopsia, Ocular hyperaemia, Visual brightness, Conjunctivitis, Vertigo, Tinnitus, Tachycardia, Palpitations, Hypertension, Hypotension, Epistaxis, Sinus congestion, Gastro Oesophageal reflux disease, Vomiting, Abdominal pain upper, Dry mouth, Rash, Myalgia, Pain in extremity, Haematuria, Chest pain, Fatigue, Feeling hot, Heart rate increased. Rare (≥ 1/10,000 and <1/1,000): Cerebrovascular accident, Transient ischaemic attack, Seizure, Seizure recurrence, Syncope, Non-arteritic anterior ischaemic optic neuropathy (NAION), Retinal vascular occlusion, Retinal haemorrhage, Arteriosclerotic retinopathy, Retinal disorder, Glaucoma, Visual field defect, Diplopia, Visual acuity reduced, Myopia, Asthenopia, Vitreous floaters, Iris disorder, Mydriasis, Halo vision, Eye oedema, Eye swelling, Eye disorder, Conjunctival hyperaemia, Eye irritation, Abnormal sensation in eye, Eyelid oedema, Scleral discoloration, Deafness, Sudden cardiac death, Myocardial infarction, Ventricular arrhythmia, Atrial fibrillation, Unstable angina, Throat tightness, Nasal oedema, Nasal dryness, Hypoaesthesia oral, Stevens-Johnson Syndrome (SJS), Toxic Epidermal Necrolysis (TEN), Penile haemorrhage, Priapism, Haematospermia, Erection increased, Irritability **Precautions:** Erectile dysfunction can be associated with a number of contributing conditions, e.g. hypertension, diabetes mellitus, hypercholesterolaemia or cardiovascular disease. As a result, all men with erectile dysfunction should be advised to consult their doctor within 6 months for a clinical review of potential underlying conditions and risk factors associated with erectile dysfunction (ED). If symptoms of ED have not improved after taking VIAGRA CONNECT on several consecutive occasions, or if their erectile dysfunction worsens, the patient should be advised to consult their doctor. Cardiovascular risk factors: Since there is a degree of cardiac risk associated with sexual activity, the cardiovascular status of men should be considered prior to initiation of therapy. Agents for the treatment of erectile dysfunction, including sildenafil, are not recommended to be used by those men who with light or moderate physical activity, such as walking briskly for 20 minutes or climbing 2 flights of stairs, feel very breathless or experience chest pain. The following patients are considered at low cardiovascular risk from sexual activity: patients who have been successfully revascularised (e.g. via coronary artery bypass grafting, stenting, or angioplasty), patients with asymptomatic controlled hypertension, and those with mild valvular disease. These patients may be suitable for treatment but should consult a doctor before resuming sexual activity. Patients previously diagnosed with the following must be advised to consult with their doctor before resuming sexual activity: uncontrolled hypertension, moderate to severe valvular disease, left ventricular dysfunction, hypertrophic obstructive and other cardiomyopathies, or significant arrhythmias. Sildenafil has vasodilator properties, resulting in mild and transient decreases in blood pressure. Patients with increased susceptibility to vasodilators include those with left ventricular outflow obstruction (e.g., aortic stenosis), or those with the rare syndrome of multiple system atrophy manifesting as severely impaired autonomic control of blood pressure. Men with these conditions must not use the product without consulting a doctor. Sildenafil potentiates the hypotensive effect of nitrates (see Contra-indications). Serious cardiovascular events, including myocardial infarction, unstable angina, sudden cardiac death, ventricular arrhythmia, cerebrovascular haemorrhage, transient ischaemic attack, hypertension and hypotension have been reported post-marketing in temporal association with the use of sildenafil. Most, but not all, of these patients had pre-existing cardiovascular risk factors. Many events were reported to occur during or shortly after sexual intercourse and a few were reported to occur shortly after the use of sildenafil without sexual activity. It is not possible to determine whether these events are related directly to these factors or to other factors. Priapism: Patients who have conditions which may predispose them to priapism (such as sickle cell anaemia, multiple myeloma or leukaemia), should consult a doctor before using agents for the treatment of erectile dysfunction, including sildenafil. Prolonged erections and priapism have been occasionally reported with sildenafil in post-marketing experience. In the event of an erection that persists longer than 4 hours, the patient should seek immediate medical assistance. If priapism is not treated immediately, penile tissue damage and permanent loss of potency could result. Concomitant use with other treatments for erectile dysfunction: The safety and efficacy of combinations of sildenafil with other treatments for erectile dysfunction have not been studied. Therefore the use of such combinations is not recommended. Effects on vision: Cases of visual defects have been reported spontaneously in connection with the intake of sildenafil and other PDE5 inhibitors (see Side Effects). Cases of non-arteritic anterior ischaemic optic neuropathy, a rare condition, have been reported spontaneously and in an observational study in connection with the intake of sildenafil and other PDE5 inhibitors (see Side Effects). Patients should be advised that in the event of any sudden visual defect, they should stop taking VIAGRA CONNECT and consult a physician immediately (see Contra-indications). Concomitant use with CYP3A4 inhibitors: Pharmacokinetic analysis of clinical trial data indicated a reduction in sildenafil clearance when co-administered with CYP3A4 inhibitors (such as ketoconazole, itraconazole, erythromycin, cimetidine). Although, no increased incidence of adverse events was observed in these patients, they should be advised to consult a doctor before taking VIAGRA CONNECT as a 25 mg tablet may be more suitable for them (see Precautions). Concomitant use with alpha-blockers: Caution is advised when sildenafil is administered to patients taking an alpha-blocker, as the co-administration may lead to symptomatic hypotension in a few susceptible individuals (see Precautions). This is most likely to occur within 4 hours post sildenafil dosing. In order to minimise the potential for developing postural hypotension, patients should be hemodynamically stable on alpha-blocker therapy prior to initiating sildenafil treatment. Thus, patients taking alpha blockers should be advised to consult their doctor before taking VIAGRA CONNECT as a 25 mg tablet may be more suitable for them. Treatment should be stopped if symptoms of postural hypotension occur, and patients should seek advice from their doctor on what to do. Effect on bleeding: Studies with human platelets indicate that sildenafil potentiates the antiaggregatory effect of sodium nitroprusside in vitro. There is no safety information on the administration of sildenafil to patients with bleeding disorders or active peptic ulceration. Therefore the use of sildenafil is not recommended in those patients with history of bleeding disorders or active peptic ulceration, and should only be administered after consultation with a doctor. Hepatic impairment: Patients with hepatic impairment must be advised to consult their doctor before taking VIAGRA CONNECT, since a 25 mg tablet may be more suitable for them (see Dosage and Method of use). Renal impairment: Patients with severe renal impairment (creatinine clearance <30 mL/min), must be advised to consult their doctor before taking VIAGRA CONNECT, since a 25 mg tablet may be more suitable for them (see Dosage and Method of use). Lactose: The film coating of the tablet contains lactose. VIAGRA CONNECT should not be administered to men with rare hereditary problems of galactose intolerance, total lactase deficiency or glucose-galactose malabsorption. Sodium: This medicinal product contains less than 1 mmol sodium (23 mg) per tablet. Patients on low sodium diets can be informed that this medicinal product is essentially 'sodium-free'. Use with alcohol: Drinking excessive alcohol can temporarily reduce a man's ability to get an erection. Men should be advised not to drink large amounts of alcohol before sexual activity. **Contra-indications:** Hypersensitivity to the active substance or to any of the excipients listed in section 6.1. Consistent with its known effects on the nitric oxide/cyclic guanosine monophosphate (cGMP) pathway, sildenafil was shown to potentiate the hypotensive effects of nitrates, and its co-administration with nitric oxide donors (such as amyl nitrite) or nitrates in any form is therefore contraindicated. Co-administration of VIAGRA CONNECT with ritonavir (a highly potent P450 enzyme inhibitor) is contraindicated (see Precautions). The co-administration of phosphodiesterase type 5 (PDE5) inhibitors, including sildenafil, with guanylate cyclase stimulators, such as riociguat, is contraindicated as it may potentially lead to symptomatic hypotension (see Precautions). Agents for the treatment of erectile dysfunction, including sildenafil, should not be used by those men for whom sexual activity may be inadvisable, and these patients should be referred to their doctor. This includes patients with severe cardiovascular disorders such as a recent (6 months) acute myocardial infarction (AMI) or stroke, unstable angina or severe cardiac failure. Sildenafil should not be used in patients with severe hepatic impairment, hypotension (blood pressure < 90/50 mmHg) and known hereditary degenerative retinal disorders such as retinitis pigmentosa (a minority of these patients have genetic disorders of retinal phosphodiesterases). This is because the safety of sildenafil has not been studied in these sub-groups of patients, and its use is therefore contraindicated. Sildenafil is contraindicated in patients who have loss of vision in one eye because of non-arteritic anterior ischaemic optic neuropathy (NAION), regardless of whether this episode was in connection or not with previous PDE5 inhibitor exposure. VIAGRA CONNECT should not be used in patients with anatomical deformation of the penis (such as angulation, cavernosal fibrosis or Peyronie's disease). VIAGRA CONNECT is not indicated for use by women. The product is not intended for men without erectile dysfunction. This product is not intended for men under 18 years of age. **Dosage and Method of use:** For Oral Use: Adults: The recommended dose is one 50 mg tablet taken with water approximately one hour before sexual activity. The maximum recommended dosing frequency is once per day. If VIAGRA CONNECT is taken with food, the onset of activity may be delayed compared to the fasted state. Patients should be advised that they may need to take VIAGRA CONNECT a number of times on different occasions (a maximum of one 50 mg tablet per day), before they can achieve a penile erection satisfactory for sexual activity. If after several attempts on different dosing occasions patients are still not able to achieve a penile erection sufficient for satisfactory sexual activity, they should be advised to consult a doctor. Elderly: Dosage adjustments are not required in elderly patients (≥ 65 years old). Renal Impairment: No dosage adjustments are required for patients with mild to moderate renal impairment. However, since sildenafil clearance is reduced in individuals with severe renal impairment (creatinine clearance <30ml/min), individuals previously diagnosed with severe renal impairment must be advised to consult their doctor before taking VIAGRA CONNECT, since a 25 mg tablet may be more suitable for them (see Precautions). Hepatic Impairment: Sildenafil clearance is reduced in individuals with hepatic impairment (e.g. cirrhosis). Individuals previously diagnosed with mild to moderate hepatic impairment must be advised to consult their doctor before taking VIAGRA CONNECT, since a 25 mg tablet may be more suitable for them (see Precautions). The safety of sildenafil has not been studied in patients with severe hepatic impairment, and its use is therefore contraindicated (see Contra-indications). Paediatric population: VIAGRA CONNECT is not indicated for individuals below 18 years of age. Use in patients taking other medicinal products: Pharmacokinetic analysis of clinical trial data indicated a reduction in sildenafil clearance when co-administered with CYP3A4 inhibitors (such as ritonavir, ketoconazole, itraconazole, erythromycin, cimetidine). With the exception of ritonavir, for which co-administration with sildenafil is contraindicated (see Contra-indications), individuals receiving concomitant treatment with CYP3A4 inhibitors must be advised to consult their doctor before taking VIAGRA CONNECT, since a 25 mg tablet may be more suitable for them (see Precautions). In order to minimise the potential of developing postural hypotension in patients receiving alpha blocker treatment (e.g. alfuzosin, doxazosin or tamsulosin), patients should be stabilised on alpha blocker therapy prior to initiating sildenafil treatment. Thus, patients taking alpha blockers must be advised to consult their doctor before taking VIAGRA CONNECT since a 25 mg tablet may be more suitable for them (see Precautions). Addition of a single dose of sildenafil to sacubitril/valsartan at steady state in patients with hypertension was associated with a significantly greater blood pressure reduction compared to administration of sacubitril/valsartan alone. Therefore, caution should be exercised when sildenafil is initiated in patients treated with sacubitril/valsartan. C+D Trade Price (exc VAT) 2 pack £8.82, 4 pack £16.17 and 8 pack £28.39 **Date of revision:** 04/2023

Please continue to report suspected adverse drug reactions with any medicine or vaccine to the MHRA through the Yellow Card Scheme. It is easiest and quickest to report adverse drug reactions online via the Yellow Card Website: <https://yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk/> or search for MHRA Yellow Card in the Google Play or Apple App Store. Alternatively, you can report via some clinical IT systems (EMIS/SystemOne/Vision/MiDatabank) or by calling the Commission on Human Medicines (CHM), free phone line: 0800-731-6789. Adverse reactions/events should also be reported to MAH at e-mail address: pv.uk@viatris.com.

The SmPC for this product, including adverse reactions, precautions, contra-indications, and method of use can be found at: <http://www.mhra.gov.uk/Safetyinformation/Medicinesinformation/SPCandPILs/index.htm> and from Viatris Medical Information, Building 4, Trident Place, Hatfield Business Park, Mosquito Way, Hatfield, Hertfordshire, AL10 9UL, phone no. 01707 853000, Email: info.uk@viatris.com