

DICK

A guide to the penis for men and women

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For Alan and Chris—thanks for all the fun

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INTRODUCTION: STRAIGHT TALK

1

General and Madame de Gaulle were known for summering each year in the west of Ireland. They were also known for not giving interviews. However, as the story goes, a young woman reporter from the Irish Times managed to set up an interview with Madame. The General was dozing by the fire in an adjacent room. After talking about the greatness of France and Madame's recipe for Crepes Suzette, the reporter asked: 'Madame, what brings you to Ireland each year?' 'Ah,' replied Madame. 'My dear, it is for a penis.' The reporter could not believe her ears, and blushing asked her to repeat this. 'Yes,' said Madame emphatically, 'for a penis!' At this point the General woke up and called: 'Non, non, cherie, how many times must I tell you! The word is 'appiness.'

Is this true? We hope so . . .

Why on earth would two *women* be writing a book about the penis? The answer is quite simple. We are both doctors working in the field of women's health, with more than 50 years' experience between us. Every day, we have conversations with women about their most intimate problems, their anatomy and its functioning, and their relationships

with their partners. Often we talk with those partners too. And, despite the fact that sex is now quite freely discussed, and that since the 1960s women's sexuality has been liberated from the fear of unwanted pregnancy, we have been impressed by how often both women and men lack basic information about their bodies—about their own anatomy and how it functions. Misinformation abounds and there is certainly a dearth of good information about that most friendly male appendage, the penis.

The main thrust (ahem) of our argument is that, for most people, sex is inextricably linked with a penis—yet there is no accompanying guide book. The only source for needed information may be the media, and the information imparted—dare we say, inseminated?—may be inappropriate or even erroneous. Our correction of this lack of accurate information is not intended to be in any way disrespectful or salacious, but rather informative, fun and titillating. Whether in marriage or in long- or short-term relationships, *everyone* has a need to know about the possible difficulties they or their partners may experience with the penis, so that they can be sensitive to their partners' needs, protect themselves from possible disease and know when they or their partners need professional help.

Quite understandably, men are very fond of their penises, for which they have many slang names—including treasures ('the family jewels'), military metaphors (bayonets and swords), terms of formal address ('Captain!'), endearments ('old chap') and nicknames (Willie, Percy and Old Harry). And of course we mustn't forget Dick, which we rather like, and which you'll find popping up throughout our text. However, many men are curiously reluctant to openly discuss their penises in an

informational way, although they may be very quick with jokes. (Heard about the shipment of Viagra that went missing at the city docks? The police are looking for a band of hardened criminals . . . OK, we'll stop right there, but you see what we mean.) Little boys (and girls) quickly learn slang names—dicky bird, teddy bear, worm, dewdrop—for the penis, although they know the correct words for all the other parts of the body, and they soon get the idea that talking about 'that' just isn't 'nice'. And after recently attending a showing of the paintings of Alice Neel, who has depicted several anatomically correct full-frontal nudes of men, as well as many other subjects, we found the men in our group were actually more impacted by the male nudes than were the women! (But then, wasn't it men who put all those fig leaves on statues?)

So this book has been written for *everyone* with an interest in the penis, from teenagers to nonagenarians . . .

Prime-time TV and mainstream movies nearly always include a sexual theme. Sex sells—after all, people are interested in it. But it follows a formula. The lights dim, violins play, and he and she sink onto the nearest bed, couch or sand dune. We might see a breast or buttock, catch a glimpse of pubic hair, but never anything remotely resembling a penis, let alone an upstanding one. Even *The Full Monty* was remarkable for the complete absence of its principal character. There is never any suggestion that a condom is being rolled on, or that erectile dysfunction or premature ejaculation might be a problem (that's not getting it up, and coming too quickly, respectively, and you'll be glad to learn that its words like these—and not medical terms—that we try to use in this book). There are

unwritten rules for most movies that are very carefully followed, and their effect is to deny their millions of viewers knowledge about what is normal, what actually happens in real life, and what can—and does—go wrong with the penis and the way it works. The same is true of the stereotyped video clips that accompany almost all music now—easy sex, no information. Even when it comes to pornography, in magazines or on film (and let's face it, many adults do enjoy porn from time to time, on their own or together), though the penis is well displayed, it never droops, drips or itches. And try putting the word 'penis' into an internet search: you will be rewarded with thousands of sites telling you how to make it bigger, but scarcely a single one on basic anatomy, or condom use, or what to do if it's got spots on it. One important result of this dearth of accurate information is that many people, young and old, still practise unsafe sex.

This book will give you information on the anatomy and functions of the penis, conditions that affect the appearance of the penis and how these may affect a man's partners, circumcision, hygiene, condoms, sexually transmitted diseases, vasectomy, impotence, premature ejaculation, discharges, and some diseases of the penis and its appendages. It will also address some common myths, like the importance of penis size. At the end of the book, we provide as many of the slang or common usage terms as possible—nearly 400 in fact, and we have used many of these in our text. As a young woman, one of us was very embarrassed to find out that she had been using a 'dirty' term as slang for something else. She misunderstood the connotation in which she heard the word used and thought it referred to someone not very bright. The real meaning