

Urinary and sexual symptoms: clues, not diagnoses

A symptom is real, but its meaning stays open until it is turned into a pattern: when it began, what triggers it, what changed at the same time and how it affects your life. That pattern tells your urologist which systems need attention, which dangerous causes must be excluded and which test will actually change the plan.

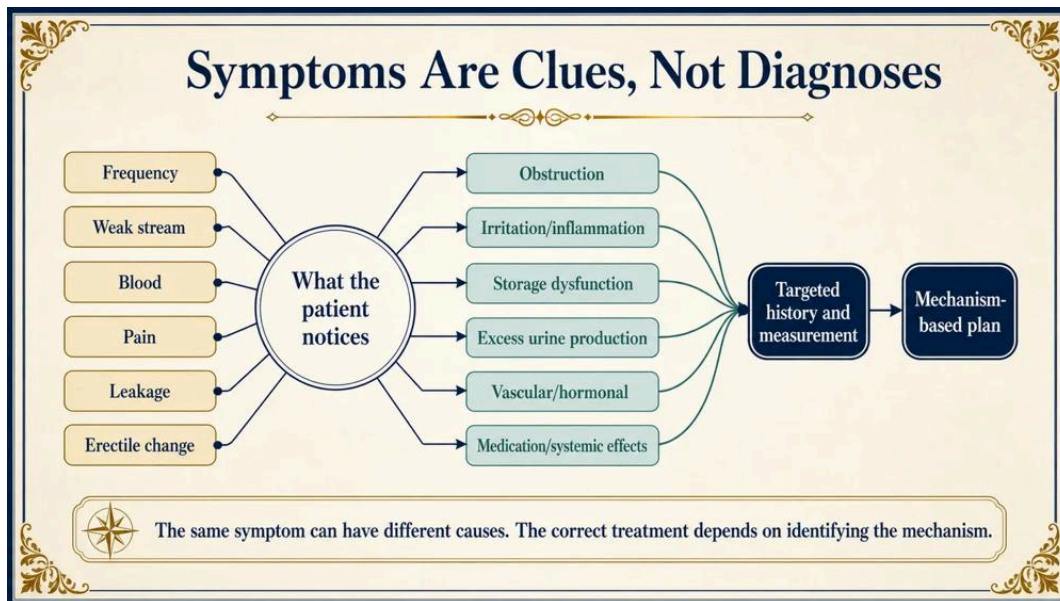


Figure 1.1. Symptoms Are Clues, Not Diagnoses.

Key points

- One symptom can come from many conditions, and one condition can cause complaints that seem unrelated.
- The organ producing the complaint is not always the organ that explains it.
- Many urinary complaints sort into storage, emptying, urine production or pain.
- The timeline often reveals more than the intensity: why is this happening now?
- A normal test is reassuring only for the question that test was designed to answer.
- Symptom relief and investigation can usually proceed together, as part of a plan.

Get prompt care if you notice

- Fever with a blocked urinary system
- Sudden complete inability to urinate, with or without pain
- Sudden severe testicular pain
- Clots blocking urination, significant trauma or rapidly worsening kidney function

Questions to ask your urologist

- What are the leading possible causes of my symptom, and is anything dangerous being excluded?
- Which part of the urinary or sexual system appears to be affected?
- Could one of my medications or another medical condition be contributing?
- What question will each proposed test answer?
- Can my symptoms be treated while the evaluation continues?
- Which changes should send me for urgent care, and when will we reassess?

Find a urologist near you: localurology.com · Adapted from *A Urology Consult in a Book* by David Shusterman, MD, board-certified urologist. General information, not medical advice. Talk with your own doctor about your situation.