



Sex During Pregnancy

Is it safe to have sex while I am pregnant?

Yes, it is safe for most women to have sex during pregnancy. This includes vaginal sex (penis, fingers, or vibrator in the vagina), oral sex, manual sex (using your hands), and anal sex. Unless your health care provider has told you not to have sex for a medical reason, you can safely enjoy sex throughout your pregnancy. During pregnancy, your baby grows in your uterus. The baby is protected during sex by your cervix (the opening to your uterus), the amniotic sac (bag of waters) in your uterus, and the amniotic fluid (water) in the bag of waters.

When should sex be avoided?

You should not have sex if you have:

- Leaking amniotic fluid
- Preterm labor
- Vaginal bleeding
- Placenta previa (placenta that covers all or part of your cervical opening)

You should avoid touching herpes lesions (sores) on your partner's mouth or genitals. If you or your partner have new partners while you are pregnant, you need to protect yourself from sexually transmitted infections by using a condom or dental dam. If you have other health concerns about the safety of sex in your pregnancy, talk with your health care provider.

Will my desire for sex change in pregnancy?

Your body and mind go through many changes during pregnancy. It is common for your sexual desire to be different when you are pregnant. Some women have more interest in sex during pregnancy, and others have less interest. Some women are more interested in having sex during the middle of pregnancy, but less interested at the beginning and end of pregnancy. There are some specific changes during pregnancy that can affect how you feel about sex:

During pregnancy, you can have changes in your body like nausea, backache, or being tired. These changes can be uncomfortable. Not feeling well can lead to less desire to have sex. You have more blood flow to your pelvis. This can cause you to be more sensitive to sexual touch, which can make sex more enjoyable for you. Being more sensitive can also cause you to feel either more interested or more uncomfortable during sex. Your breasts become larger and more sensitive. It may be uncomfortable to have them touched during sex. As your pregnancy continues, your uterus (womb) and abdomen (belly) become larger, which may make it difficult to find a comfortable position during sex. Your changing body may also affect your partner's desire to have sex.

How can I have vaginal sex comfortably while I am pregnant?

There are several ways to make vaginal sex (penis, fingers, or vibrator into the vagina) more comfortable during pregnancy:

- **Make sure your vagina is well lubricated:** You may want to use a water-based lubricant.
- **Try different positions:** Being on your back with your partner on top of you (missionary position) may not be the most comfortable position for you, especially as your abdomen (belly) gets bigger. You may find it more comfortable to be on top of your partner, lying on your side, standing, or on your hands and knees. If you are on top of your partner, you can face forward or backward.
- **Talk with your partner:** Let your partner know what feels good and what doesn't. If vaginal sex is painful for you, try changing positions and/or using more lubricant.



Is it safe to have oral sex, have anal sex, or use a vibrator during pregnancy?

Oral sex is safe in pregnancy as long as you and your partner don't have a herpes lesion on your mouth or genitals. Your partner should not blow air into your vagina. Anal sex is also safe during pregnancy. You should be careful not to spread bacteria from the rectum to the vagina. If you're going to have vaginal sex after anal sex, wash the body part or vibrator that was in your anus before putting it into your vagina. You can use a vibrator while you are pregnant. Make sure the vibrator is clean to prevent infection.

Will sex cause me to go into labor?

Sex during pregnancy, especially in the third trimester, may cause you to have some cramps or contractions right after sex and during orgasm. Your orgasm releases a hormone called oxytocin, which can cause your uterus to contract. Male semen contains hormones called prostaglandins, which may cause contractions. Contractions from sex will typically go away over 1 to 2 hours. If they continue or become stronger, contact your health care provider. After vaginal sex, you may have spotting (a very small amount of bleeding from the vagina). This is because there are small blood vessels on the surface of your cervix that can leak when they are touched. Mild spotting for 24 to 48 hours is normal. If you have vaginal bleeding that is heavy enough to need a pad, contact your health care provider.

What if I don't want to have sex with my partner while I am pregnant?

It is important to talk with your partner. Tell your partner how you feel about sex during pregnancy. Encourage your partner to talk with you about how both of you feel about sex in pregnancy. If sex is not something that you want, there are other ways to be close to your partner such as touching, cuddling, or simply spending time together.

How soon after my baby is born can I have vaginal or anal sex?

It is safe to have vaginal or anal sex after your postpartum bleeding has stopped, and any stitches you got for tears are healed. Some women may feel ready around 4 weeks after giving birth, while other women may need to wait for several more weeks. When you have vaginal or anal sex again, use lubrication if needed. If you have pain, you can try positions that do not put pressure on the sore area. If you keep having pain with sex, talk with your health care provider. You may want to put a finger into your vagina first before larger objects such as a penis or vibrator. Be sure to talk with your health care provider about birth control if you want to prevent pregnancy.

For More Information

Cleveland Clinic

<https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/articles/sex-during-pregnancy>

Mayo Clinic

<http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/pregnancy-week-by-week/in-depth/sex-during-pregnancy/art-20045318?pg=1>

University of California San Francisco Medical Center

https://www.ucsfhealth.org/education/sex_during_pregnancy/

Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level: 7.8

Approved August 2021. This handout replaces "Sex During Pregnancy" published in Volume 62, Number 5, September/October 2017.

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