

Enjoy your sexuality on your own and together

Congratulations, you are expecting a child! When you first met, there was something attractive about the other person. This attraction is part of sexuality. People want to be close to each other again and again. Sexuality is a strong basic need, and we human beings keep longing for other people.

A person develops throughout their life by moving from one developmental crisis to another. Motherhood and fatherhood will permanently change you in many ways. Your sexuality also evolves throughout your entire adulthood. Becoming a parent is a small sidenote in your overall development as a sexual being. Expecting parents often wonder about the effects of pregnancy and the child's birth on themselves as a couple and as lovers. As the pregnancy progresses, the child assumes the main role in the parents' mind. And once born, the baby firmly takes its place between the parents, often both mentally and physically.

Some say that the parents' relationship is the child's spiritual home. To ensure that the child has a home in which to grow safely, you as parents should not toss your relationship aside. Sexuality is like glue that sets a couple apart from just friends. In a mature relationship, the partners can express the following to each other: my sexuality is mine, it is part of me, and I am ready to share it with you. Finnish people highly value fidelity and see cheating as a serious, often fatal blow to trust.

To achieve a happy and stable relationship, you need to be able to discuss the temporary changes that the newborn will cause to your sexuality as a couple. When a couple stops talking, the ensuing silence fills with assumptions and guesses.

The other person still feels familiar, but can you be certain of their thoughts after all? If you as parents do not talk to each other, it is possible that beliefs, assumptions and misunderstandings start filling your thoughts. If they are left unresolved, they will impact your mutual trust and may cause bitterness. When a child is born, two become three. However, the original unit, the couple, is still there, and you should cherish this connection. In the long run, this will benefit all three of you.

Do I dare to make love during pregnancy?

At the early stages of pregnancy, the thought of the baby is still distant. Although the embryo is tiny, the future parents want to protect it. The expecting mother often monitors the reactions of her body, comparing them to what she has read about other people's reactions. The concern over the well-being and development of the tiny embryo may cause the parents to give up sex and to wait for a safer time. Light bleeding that sometimes occurs during early pregnancy may feel like a warning sign and may be hard to forget even after the bleeding stops. Vaginal bleeding is a serious issue in itself and a reason to refrain from vaginal intercourse. After the bleeding stops, there is less reason to worry. If bleeding occurs during the second or third trimester, its cause should be determined. Occasional bleeding during early pregnancy does not pose a particular risk as long as the pregnancy continues, and sex and intercourse may again become part of your everyday life.

Some people try to get pregnant for a long time using calendars, schedules and ovulation tests. They may not make love spontaneously simply because they want to, but because they are hoping to have a child. Sex dictated by the calendar may become a burden on both partners, making it more difficult to feel sexual desire. And when the couple finally conceives, one or both of them may feel relieved when love-making is no longer obligatory. In such situations, it is a good idea to have

an honest talk so that the sudden absence of sex does not leave one of you wondering whether your partner no longer finds you desirable.

Can making love harm the baby?

During the second trimester, the mucous membranes of the expecting mother are juicy, she may feel better lubricated and may get aroused easier than before. This may inspire you to have vaginal sex frequently. Increased lubrication and getting turned on easier lay a good foundation for surrendering to sexual pleasure. Enjoyable sex causes your bodies to release plenty of oxytocin, also called the love hormone. It strengthens the bond between lovers. Good sex is the glue that keeps a relationship strong. Later when the mother is nursing the child, oxytocin will strengthen their mutual bond. Parents sometimes worry whether a penis deep in the vagina could harm the baby. The developing baby is safe, protected in the womb behind the cervix, inside the myometrium, enclosed in the amniotic sac and amniotic fluid. Pressure on the growing uterus may, however, cause the mother to feel some discomfort. If this is the case, it is helpful to try positions that do not put direct pressure on the uterus.

What if there are contractions after sex?

Expecting mothers sometimes experience some hardening of the uterus during or after sex. The hardening is a contraction and usually goes away after a while. If you feel painful contractions when you move and they do not go away at rest, consult a doctor. The doctor will examine the length of the cervix and assess whether the contractions are ripening the cervix for labour. This may cause a premature delivery. In this case, the doctor may advise you not to have vaginal sex. After 37 weeks of pregnancy there is usually no need to refrain from sex because there is no need to delay the delivery.

Contractions during or after sex can have a few different causes. During vaginal sex, the penis may mechanically stimulate the external os. To avoid contractions if you are prone to them, it is a good idea to change positions so that the penis does not reach as deep. Sperm contains prostaglandin, a hormone that may also cause contractions. However, the concentration of prostaglandin in sperm is quite low compared to the prostaglandin used to induce labour. However, if you notice that you have contractions after sex, you can try using a condom to prevent prostaglandin from entering the vagina. During pleasurable sex, the female body also produces oxytocin which causes contractions. During childbirth, oxytocin is released in large quantities, causing the cervix to dilate. However, sexual pleasure does not usually cause any harmful changes.

Milk and pleasure

In late pregnancy, the expecting mother's breasts are getting ready for breastfeeding, and may produce some drops of milk even before the baby is born. Once the mother starts breastfeeding, oxytocin causes a let-down reflex, or a release of milk from the breasts. This may also happen during enjoyable sex. Some people are put off by the idea of breastfeeding and sexuality being connected like this. In situations like these, it is possible to stop the flow of milk by pushing the areola firmly with your palm.

Breastfeeding feels good because breasts are a particularly erogenous zone for both men and women. We usually hear stories of the pain that breastfeeding may initially cause. The pleasure it can give may surprise the breastfeeding mother. There is no reason to be alarmed if breastfeeding makes you feel good. Perhaps nature in its wisdom uses this as a way to ensure that the baby gets more milk in the future. However, the skin of the nipples often grows numb as the baby feeds

repeatedly. The numbness is usually not permanent. In most cases, the nipples regain their sensitivity after the baby is weaned.

The first time after childbirth

The first sexual intercourse after childbirth may make you nervous. The mother may wonder if sex will be painful. Her partner may be afraid of hurting her. And both will wonder whether the baby will start to cry right in the middle of an intimate moment. To feel less nervous the first time, you can use a vaginal lubricant. It will make touching feel pleasant and effortless. You may even want to make it a permanent part of sex from now on. Using lubricant is particularly important when you are using a condom: it reduces the wrong kind of friction and helps the condom stay intact.

You need to use birth control to avoid a new pregnancy as soon as you start having sex after childbirth. It is easy to buy condoms at a grocery store. You do not need a doctor's prescription for them. You should also use a condom if the mother's vaginal discharge, or lochia, still continues. This prevents infections in the mother's reproductive organs. Some people rely on the effectiveness of breastfeeding as a way to prevent pregnancy. Exclusive breastfeeding is known to delay periods, but who knows when the periods will resume? It is always possible to get pregnant because menstruation usually begins two weeks after an egg has been released, unless the egg has been fertilised. This means that the mother can get pregnant before her period returns. People's courage, willingness to experiment and sexual desire vary. Some cannot wait to resume their sex life, while others wait for months. The only way you find the right time for you is to talk about it. It is also a good idea to remember that unnecessary delays may increase the threshold for getting started again.

Is a mother allowed to want sex?

The birth of your child will change your roles for good. New mothers and fathers may feel so burdened by their new role and responsibility that they put their former roles as lovers aside. Over time, it will become easier to combine the roles of a mother and a partner in one's mind. However, it may still feel contradictory that the mother of a small baby should experience sexual desire and pleasure. The mother's view of motherhood is partly shaped by the example set by her own mother. It may be difficult even for adults to think about their parents as sexual and sexually active individuals. For many, this raises the question whether a mother is allowed to want sex. The old idea of motherhood and sexuality being incompatible is, unfortunately, deeply ingrained in people's minds.

Partner's lack of sexual desire

Sometimes not just the mother but also the partner starts to see the mother as not an ordinary person but as an idealised mother figure. The partner may notice that the woman is so preoccupied with motherhood that it becomes hard to persuade her sexual side to come out in everyday life and in the small luxurious moments when the couple is alone. The caring and worrying mother is always there. The partner's view of motherhood is also largely shaped by their own mother. As a result, the partner may find it difficult to see the mother as the sexually attractive woman she was before the baby was born. The partner may wonder if it is alright to make love to the woman now that she is a mother. If the woman feels sexual desire, a small whisper in the partner's ear is often enough to encourage them.

Both partners need to be touched. Members of opposite sexes often express their wishes and desires differently. Many women are verbal while men prefer action. When the exhausting everyday life with a small baby causes you to stop talking, there are far too many opportunities for

misunderstandings. A classic scenario is one where the mother is so worn out by breastfeeding and holding the baby that a gentle hug from her partner makes her say “not now, honey.” The hugger may easily get the impression that since there has been a break from sex, their touch is no longer welcome at all. Some say that a woman can surrender to sex when the partners talk to each other, while a man can surrender to having a conversation when the sexual connection is there. Which one comes first? How should you begin to solve this question? Each partner is responsible for their own and shared happiness. Simply take the first step towards the other person.

When the baby arrives, the parents get immersed in baby care and an entire world of baby-related things. In this situation, they may both feel lack of sexual desire. This is beneficial to the helpless baby who then is well taken care of. Over time, sexual desire will return, as this is human nature. The partners may not start to feel sexual desire at the same time. One of the partners may seem sexually dormant when the other feels like being sexually active. Masturbation, or solo sex, is a good way to experience sexual pleasure at home. Masturbation is an aspect of human sexuality. It does not mean that your partner is missing out on something. Masturbation is simply a way to enjoy your sexuality at any stage of your life. It is something of your own. Being in a relationship does not give anyone the right to limit their partner’s private sexual pleasure.

Things may still be quiet on the sex front even when your child is a toddler. Sex is no longer spontaneous but needs planning to actually happen. The evening routines of your family can bring you closer as partners if you both take action to put the children to bed. This way, the house will quiet down for the two of you, making sexual encounters possible.

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