



Sex in pregnancy

Changes in sex drive are normal in pregnancy, both for you and for your partner. You may feel less like sex if you are tired, nauseous or uncomfortable, or you may want more than normal: extra vaginal lubrication often makes orgasm easier. Some men adore the sight of their pregnant partner, while others find it a big “turn off”.

A slight brownish-red blood loss sometimes occurs after sex and is not normally a problem, but contact your midwife if you are worried. If you have had a premature labour in a previous pregnancy, or have threatened to start labour prematurely in this pregnancy, vigorous sex is best avoided. Excessive nipple massage in mid-pregnancy may also trigger strong Braxton Hicks contractions.

Tips for a healthy sex life in pregnancy

- Find time to be together – it is not necessary to have full penetrative sex if you don't feel like it – just enjoy kissing, cuddling and mutual masturbation.
- Massage each other before and during sex with grapeseed oil and 2 or 3 drops of relaxing essential oil, eg ylang ylang - this is safe in pregnancy but avoid getting oil in your vagina. Add 4 drops of oil to your bath and take a dip together, but avoid aromatherapy oils if your waters have broken.
- Bach flower remedies - Rescue remedy, 4 drops neat on your tongue, is a good anti-stress remedy immediately before penetration; olive or hornbeam, 2 drops in water, if you are too tired.
- If your lack of desire for sex affects your relationship with your partner, talk to your midwife or consider hypnotherapy or counselling.
- Experiment with different positions - on top of your partner, sitting astride him or on your side, pressure on your bump is reduced.

- Oral sex is safe but don't let your partner blow air in your vagina.
- Anal intercourse may cause infection and is probably best avoided in pregnancy unless you are scrupulous about washing and passing urine immediately afterwards.
- Vibrators are safe if used carefully to avoid damaging your vagina or cervix or causing infection.
- After your baby's birth, vaginal blood loss, bruising or stitches can make sex uncomfortable but it's wise to attempt vaginal penetration before your postnatal examination with your midwife or GP, usually at about 6 weeks. Any difficulties you experience during sex may reveal stitches which have not fully dissolved or an unhealed part of your vagina or cervix.
- Don't forget to sort out contraception!
- Remember – you started as a couple and deserve to spend time together – ask family or friends to baby-sit occasionally.

Always inform your midwife if you are using any natural remedies or receiving treatment from a complementary therapist

If you have any concerns about sex during pregnancy and would like a personal consultation by telephone from one of Expectancy's Consultants, call us on **0906 400 6227** (calls charged at £1.50 per minute, from a BT landline; calls from mobiles and other networks may vary)