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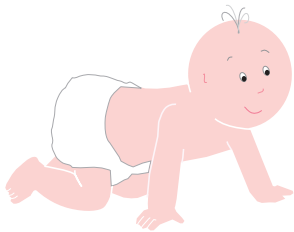
Your Top Ten Pregnancy Sex Questions Answered

by Ann Douglas

There's no need to spend the next nine months fumbling around in the dark, looking for answers to all your pregnancy-related sex questions. Here are the answers to those questions that you've been waiting for someone else in prenatal class to ask.

- 1. Is it safe to have sex during pregnancy?** In most cases, yes. You'll only be advised to extinguish the flames of passion if there's a medical problem that would make intercourse or orgasm a risky venture, such as vaginal bleeding or leaking amniotic fluid, or if you're threatening to go into premature labor.
- 2. What about oral sex?** Oral sex is considered safe during pregnancy provided that your partner doesn't blow air into your vagina. That could result in a potentially fatal air embolism.
- 3. Speaking of oral sex, my partner says I taste different. What's that about?** The hormonal changes of pregnancy can give your vaginal secretions a stronger taste and odor that can turn some people off.
- 4. Does an orgasm feel different when you're pregnant?** It depends. For some women, it's business as usual; for others, it's a whole new world—literally. While some women say that orgasms are more intense during pregnancy, others describe them as far less satisfying. And some women who've never had an orgasm in their lives report having them for the first time ever during pregnancy. So pretty much anything goes...
- 5. Is it normal to feel crampy after sex?** Yes, that's your body's response to the oxytocin that is released while you're having an orgasm.
- 6. I can't believe how lubricated I become when I'm sexually aroused. Does this go along with being pregnant?** Yes, you can blame—or thank—your body's increased estrogen levels for the extra lubrication.
- 7. Do I need to pack my sex toys away during pregnancy?** According to Anne Semans and Cathy Winks, authors of *The Mother's Guide to Sex* (Three Rivers Press, 2001, \$22), there's no need to pack your sex toys away just because you're having a baby. Just keep them clean and well-lubricated, and be sure to adjust the angle and depth of insertion to avoid bruising your cervix.

- 8. My sex drive seems to come and go. Is this normal?** While fatigue, nausea, hemorrhoids, and the other aches-and-pains of pregnancy may knock the wind out of your libido at various points in your pregnancy, things ain't over in the bedroom until the fat lady sings. (Or gets hit with the first pushing contraction.)
- 9. My partner has been avoiding sex since the pregnancy test came back positive three weeks ago. He's totally freaking me out! Is this a typical guy reaction?** Your partner's reaction is not at all unusual, believe it or not. Whether it's concern about hurting the baby or an irrational feeling that the baby could somehow be "watching" you that's motivating this bedroom boycott, try to be patient with his feelings. After all, he must be pretty concerned if he's voluntarily going without sex!
- 10. Is there sex after baby?** Eventually, yes. In the immediate shortrun? Well, maybe. An often-cited study on postpartum sex found that only one in five couples managed to find the time and energy for sexual intercourse during the month following childbirth. And if you think that dodging that episiotomy site or cesarean incision is the trickiest part of getting your sex life back on track, I've got news for you: the biggest obstacle between you and a night of passion is a tiny eight-pound bundle of joy. Oh, baby!



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The Pregnant Kama Sutra: The Big Three

Wondering what positions work best while you've got a baby on board? Here's a sneak peak at what's going on inside the bedrooms of the nation.

Position	Why it's hot
1. Woman on top ("female superior")	Allows you to control the depth and angle of penetration and keeps you from lying flat on your back (a position that may cause you to faint after your fifth month).
2. Side-by-side ("spoons")	Gets your tummy out front and out of the way, and allows for lots of foreplay and cuddling.
3. Rear entry ("doggy style")	Gets your tummy out of the way, but allows for greater ease of movement than with the side-by-side position.