

## Pregnancy Sex: To Do It Or Not To Do It?

[PREGNANCY](#) | JUNE 3, 2013 | BY [BALVINDER SANDHU](#)



*Sex during pregnancy and after giving birth can be as enjoyable as before, as long as you're paying close attention to your body*

One of the things that many women ponder about once they find out they're pregnant is whether or not they are able to carry on having sex with their husband during pregnancy. Is it safe for me? And what about my baby – will it harm him/her in any way? After all that action in the bedroom – or elsewhere – while you were trying to conceive, women sometimes wonder if a sexual drought would follow for the next nine months or so.

But fret not, because, according to medical experts, apart from a few special circumstances, there is nothing to worry about on this front. In fact, it should be business as usual.

“Sex in pregnancy is safe,” assures Dr Anthony Siow, Medical Director of the Parkway Gynaecology Screening & Treatment Centre at Gleneagles Hospital. “Sex does not cause a miscarriage. The penis will not get pass the cervix. So it will not cause the water bag to burst, the cervix to dilate or come into contact with the baby in any way.

“There are only a few conditions where gynaecologists will advise the couple to refrain from sex. They are – when there’s bleeding in early pregnancy or bleeding later in pregnancy; when the placenta is low, a condition called placenta previa; when there is a past history of early labour before seven months’ pregnancy, or a short cervix length; if the waterbag has burst; when there is a vaginal infection or a suspicion of sexually transmitted disease in the male; and if you don’t feel like it.”

### **Communication Is Key**

While sex during pregnancy is mostly safe, women should still pay attention to their bodies and decide accordingly. The main thing to remember here is – if you don’t feel like it, don’t do it. It’s also important to communicate what you’re feeling with your partner so you are both on the same wavelength.

“There is no limit to when you can have sex in pregnancy,” Dr Siow explains. “Women with moderate to severe morning sickness will probably not be in the mood to have sex. Some women report a heightened sex drive in the second trimester because of the hormonal changes. In the third trimester, the size of the tummy may be a hindrance to sex but there are positions to overcome that to allow the couple to enjoy sex.”

Joyce Huang recalls how she and her husband enjoyed sex for the most part of her pregnancy two years ago: “I didn’t suffer much from morning sickness and actually was more in the mood for sex when I was pregnant. We were a bit concerned at first but our doctor told us that there was no reason why we couldn’t still enjoy sex so we ended up having a rather active sex life during the pregnancy.”

Deciding which positions to engage in is the key to enjoying sex during pregnancy, especially during the later stages. It's best to try a few of them and see what feels most comfortable for you.



“It is probably easier to have sex in a position that the women is most comfortable in,” says Dr Siow. “These are the women on top position, side by side position, or women on all fours. The women on top positions allow her to control the pace of sex and the depth of penetration. This will lessen any discomfort that may lead to a false sense of alarm. “It may be wise to use some lubricant as the hormonal changes of pregnancy can reduce vaginal secretions in some women.”

### **Listen To Your Body**

Pay attention to how you are feeling even while you are having sex. Listen to what your body is telling you and if at any time during sex you feel pain or are severely uncomfortable, you should stop.

Dr Siow elaborates: “If there is any pain, severe discomfort or bleeding arising from sex, then the couple should stop and let the symptoms pass. As the womb enlarges with pregnancy, orgasm may become more intense and sometimes painful. They may even feel like Braxton-Hick contractions, but this should pass after a few minutes.”

Once baby makes his or her entrance into the world, it’s not just the physical changes that affect your sex life. It’s often hard to find the time or the energy to get down to it, even if you’re in the mood. It might be difficult to get back onto the saddle, but there’s no reason why you can’t get back onto it.

“Sex after birth really depends on when the mother has recovered from the delivery and found some much needed rest to be in the mood,” says Dr Siow. “Generally, an episiotomy or a Caesarean section may take about three weeks to heal before there will not be any pain during sex. If the mother is breastfeeding, vaginal lubricant is recommended.”

“Sex after I had my son last year was very uncomfortable,” says Grace Lim. “I also had my mind elsewhere most of the time and was hardly in the mood. The fact that it was physically uncomfortable made it worse. But it got better after a few tries and all is back to normal now.”

And, as always when it comes to matters concerning a relationship, communication is the key. “The postnatal period can be challenging both emotionally and physically for a new mother, and a lower libido is not uncommon. It is best that the couple communicate with each other frankly about their wants, needs and feelings as sex may only be but one of the many ways the couple can feel intimate with each other,” advises Dr Siow.