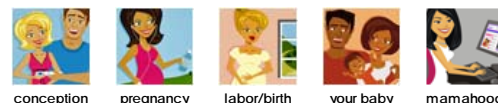
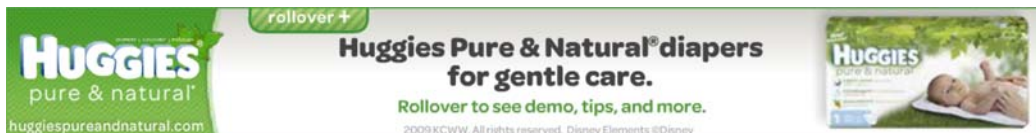


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Pregnancy & Baby Index: Fertility and Conception: How to keep sex exciting when trying to conceive

How to keep sex exciting when trying to conceive

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Elizabeth Weiss McGolerick

When you're purposely trying to make a baby, it takes more than just candlelight and Marvin Gaye to keep sex exciting. Attempting to conceive is just as much of an emotional and mental journey as a physical one, especially if you've been working at it for some time with no luck. Follow our tips to keep sex fun when you are trying to get pregnant!

If [sex](#) is starting to feel like more of an obligation than a joy, it's time to determine how to keep baby-making a pleasant, memorable experience rather than one more addition to your list of chores.

Communicate with each other

Many couples decide, "Let's have a baby!" and plunge full-force into the adventure with overflowing feelings of happiness and hope. But if conception doesn't happen immediately, trying to conceive can begin to feel like a clock-in, clock-out job. The romance, passion and sheer fun of sex may disappear.

The joy that you went into the endeavor with can become a stew of resentment, blame, impatience, disappointment, failed expectations and missed opportunities for either one or both partners. It becomes about what you don't have rather than what you do.

Making an effort to communicate with each other is the first solution. "Acknowledge and validate your partner's feelings," says John W. Beiter, clinical psychologist and certified sex therapist. "Use 'I' statements and don't retaliate with defensive posturing by reacting back with 'you' statements." Conflict resolution skills and simple patience and kindness can help you ease tensions in the bedroom and recapture the [intimacy](#) you need to make sex and conception exciting again.

But talking about sex isn't easy, even for the closest couples. "Many people, regardless of age, struggle with being open to discussing their sexuality with their partners," says Beiter. He actually established the **Beiter Sexuality Preference Indicator** to help individuals identify their sexual preferences and become comfortable discussing their sexuality with each other. "It's been useful for couples to share the results and begin the dialogue they've so often dreaded."

Develop a plan

While spontaneity is important when it comes to sex, let's face it – the goal is to get pregnant and you simply have to make that magic happen on very specific days of the month for the best odds. To try to minimize the pressure, couples can develop a conception plan.

"Stay focused on creating physical intimacy while trying to conceive," says Patricia O'Laughlin, psychotherapist at the **Center for the Psychology of Women**. "If a couple sits down and discusses what fertility method will be used, how specifically the man can support the woman as she tracks her bodily changes and how they might be able to engage in [sexual activity](#) outside of her ovulation times, the couple



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will experience a greater amount of intimacy.”

Developing a plan means that, again, communication is super-important. And it's super-effective. “Open communication is one of the best ways a couple can remain intimate and feel close to each other during a stressful time,” says O’Laughlin. “It will also help minimize the stress a woman may experience when she finds herself carrying the entire load. Stress will only decrease a woman’s sex drive.”

Check out our ovulation calculator here to help you determine the days you are most fertile and most likely to conceive.

Consider his point of view

While a woman is hyper-aware of the short window of opportunity during [ovulation](#) and can become wrapped up in monitoring her body’s monthly cues, she isn’t the only stressed partner. The act of conception continues to support and encourage a performance-based sexuality where a man “must achieve” an erection and successfully ejaculate, Beiter explains. “Basing your sexuality purely on performance not only limits the amount of sex you will have but also has the potential of extinguishing the erotic desire in your sexual relationship.”

He says, “Women are just as invested in the erection performance of men as are men. If a man fails to ‘rise for the occasion,’ the woman typically feels she isn’t ‘sexy enough’ or unable to arouse her partner, thus affecting her sexual self-esteem.” A woman may also feel that the man isn’t as interested in making a baby as he claimed to be, often an unfair and inaccurate conclusion.

“We need to encourage pleasure-based sexuality where the main goals are fun, intimacy and emotional connectedness,” says Beiter. “This will almost guarantee that sexual relations with your spouse will remain exciting and something to embrace and continually anticipate.”

Remember your relationship

“Trying to conceive is extremely stressful and can affect a person’s perception of themselves and/or the couple’s relationship,” says O’Laughlin. It’s crucial for couples to not lose sight of each other. “Pregnancy is a major life change and contains so many conflicting feelings. A couple should discuss these so they don’t allow themselves to become solely absorbed in the conceiving process.”

Couples who have exhausted the “typical” pick-me-ups in the bedroom may actually be on the cusp of fearing they’re infertile. “The mental, emotional and physical experiences of infertility,” or the fear of it, “can have a negative impact on your sexual desire,” says Carol Fulwiler Jones, psychotherapist and author of *Hopeful Heart, Peaceful Mind: Managing Infertility*. “Remember that sex is mental and emotional as well as physical.”

She recommends a daily exercise to help rekindle the spark. “Close your eyes, breathe slowly and deeply and remember a time you and your partner were having passionate and fun sex.” Recreate the memory as if it were happening in the present. Recall sounds and textures and allow yourself to feel aroused. “You may want to call or text your partner to share the details of this memory,” Jones says.

Ultimately, this amazing journey is about two people creating another person. To put the excitement back in your sex life, anticipate being sexual with your partner, communicate openly with them and respect their feelings when you’re trying to conceive, and even when you’re not.

More tips on trying to conceive:

- **Babymaking 101: 10 Ways to increase your chances of conception**
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