



Intimacy After Childbirth: Staying Sexually Active and Intimate

The main reasons that women experience a decrease in sexual desire are fatigue and lack of time. Sex and intimacy are not the most important part of a relationship, but they are definitely a highly valued aspect. For most couples, figuring out how to stay sexually active and intimate with a partner following the birth of a child can help not only the individuals within the relationship, but the relationship itself. Below are some tips for staying sexually active and intimate following childbirth.

Make Time for Yourself

After pregnancy, you may find that most of your time is spent caring for your newborn, rather than on trying to be sexual with your partner. It is important to have time for yourselves after the birth of a child to maintain your relationship. Many people find that it is easy to find time for each other by:

- Having a date night. Hire a babysitter, or ask a friend or family member to watch the little one(s). If this is not an option, do things together while the baby is sleeping—take a shower, cook a nice dinner, or give each other a massage.
- Taking turns pleasing each other. Stress and fatigue may cause one or both partners to become disinterested in sexual activity and taking turns means that one person does not have to exert too much energy.
- Maintaining privacy (as best as possible!). Putting the child in another room, even for just a few nights a week, may make it easier to find time to be intimate with your partner.

Be Creative

Having a child can mean little time and opportunity for sexual activity (and fewer places!). Be creative in coming up with times and places to be sexual with your partner. For example, try sexual activity in the shower while the child is napping or asleep for the night. This can help you accomplish two things at once! If you are able to go out on a date with your partner, try being intimate in the car or try going to a hotel. Use your imagination and work with your partner to come up with creative ideas that work for you!

Fight Fatigue

Fatigue is one of the most common complaints of new parents, and one of the most common reasons couples are no longer intimate after the birth of a baby. To help counter the effects of fatigue on your sex life, try engaging in sexual activity at different times during the day, not just before bedtime. Try to get a quick moment together while the child is taking an afternoon nap. If you are breastfeeding, you may find that it is helpful to nurse before sexual activity. That way, you can put the infant down for a nap and will have fewer distractions.





Redefine Sex and Intimacy

Women should not have intercourse until after they have been cleared to do so by their doctor (it is usually about six weeks). This does not mean, however, that intimacy has to leave your relationship. Kissing or gentle touching is still an option for couples who want to remain sexual. Sometimes, though, one or both parents do not want to remain sexual, for any number of reasons. It does not mean that you cannot be intimate with your partner. Try holding hands, cuddling, or giving each other a massage. These are all great ways to remain close with your partner without being sexual.

It may also be necessary to redefine sex and intimacy. What was pleasurable before may no longer be satisfying following pregnancy. This is perfectly normal. As our bodies change, so can what we may find pleasurable. Try new things with your partner and experiment with new pleasures and sensations. Only you and your partner can determine what is "normal" for you.

Go Slow

Take your time. Do not expect to be ready to be sexually active immediately after you have healed and are given the green light from your doctor. Some women need time to feel sexual again, and this is normal. Do not force the idea; wait until you are physically, mentally, and emotionally ready.

Once you do begin sexual activity after pregnancy, many women find that it is much easier to begin slowly. The vaginal tissues and other areas of a woman's body may still be sensitive after giving birth. Positions that allow the woman to control the pace and depth of penetration, such as the woman-on-top, may be helpful.

Communicate with your Partner

Talk to your partner about your thoughts, feelings, stresses, experiences, anything and everything! Discuss your feelings about sexuality and intimacy. Explain why you do or do not want to resume sexual activity. This will help keep your partner close, even if you are unable or not wanting to resume sexual activities. Communication is just another form of intimacy that a couple can do together.

