



## What about Sex During Pregnancy?

Your feelings about sex may change during pregnancy.

These normal feelings are common:

- Some women may feel beautiful and sexual, while others may feel clumsy and fat.
- One woman may feel loved by a caring partner, while another may be alone or in a difficult relationship.
- One woman's partner may feel turned off by her growing belly, while another may love it.
- Some women don't want to have sex at all when they're pregnant; others do.

Body changes such as nausea, tiredness, or breast tenderness will affect your desire for sex. What you find exciting may also change. Some women don't want to have sex, but want to be hugged, cuddled, and loved. Your partner may or may not understand your changing interest in making love. Also, his sexual desires may change. Pregnancy can be stressful for both of you. Talk about your sex life. Try to understand and respect each other's feelings.

You should **not** have sexual intercourse if:

- Your caregiver told you not to have intercourse.
- You're at risk for preterm labor (labor occurring more than 3 weeks before your due date).
- You've had vaginal bleeding during pregnancy.
- You have painful cramps after intercourse.
- Your sexual partner has or might have a sexually transmitted disease (STD).
- You do not want to have sex.

Otherwise, it's okay to have sex. Though uterine contractions are normal when you have an orgasm, they don't cause problems for the baby during a healthy pregnancy. If you have a new partner during pregnancy, remember to use safe sex methods by having him use a condom. He might have a disease that may spread to you during sex (such as genital herpes, HIV, genital warts, or another infection).

Sex may be more comfortable if you don't lie on your back with your partner's weight on your belly. Try other positions such as lying on your sides with him behind you, or your partner on his back with you on top. If you don't want to have sexual intercourse, you can still cuddle.

For more information on pregnancy:

See our books: *Pregnancy, Childbirth & the Newborn* or *The Simple Guide to Having a Baby*.  
Take a childbirth preparation class at Great Starts, or in your local community.

For parenting tips, information for families, or to talk to someone about parenting:

**In Washington State:** Call the Family Help Line at 1-800-932-HOPE

**Outside of WA:** contact your local Circle of Parents agency at [www.circleofparents.org](http://www.circleofparents.org)

© Excerpt from *The Simple Guide to Having a Baby*, 2005.

By Great Starts, a program of Parent Trust for Washington Children.

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