

Pain with Sexual Activities During Gestation and After Childbirth

Many people assigned female at birth find that sex is particularly painful during gestation or soon after childbirth. This handout offers tips for reducing pelvic pain related to gestation.

COMMUNICATE

- People who discuss sexual pain with their partner(s) report greater satisfaction with sexual activities, despite the discomfort.
- You can use the **worksheet** on the back of this paper as a starting point for discussing sexual pain with your partner(s).

DECREASE STRESS

- When people are stressed, they report more pain with sexual activities, and that pain tends to persist longer.
- Try waiting for a time when you are rested to engage in sexual activities.
- For simple directions on making a **wellness plan** for after birth, check out: https://perinatalsupport.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/5_2020-Wellness-Plan-16.pdf

LUBRICATE

- The lining of the external and internal genitalia can be more sensitive during gestation and after birth, even if someone had a Cesarean birth. Likewise, that anus maybe more sensitive due to hemorrhoids worsened by hormonal changes.
- A lubricant can serve to reduce friction and pain.
- If you are using condoms, consider Good Clean Love, Slippery Stuff, or anything by Sliquid. If you are not using condoms, consider coconut oil or Yes Oil-based. Remember that oil can breakdown a condom.
- Avoid any lubricants with glycerin, propylene glycol, or chlorhexidine as these chemicals can irritate mucus membranes and increase the risk of infection.

POSITION

- **Gestation:** sidelying and seated positions may be more comfortable
- **After birth:** positions that maximize control may be more comfortable

GET HELP

- If you are not satisfied with how you feel during sexual activities, don't hesitate to get help from a provider specializing in pelvic pain and/or a pelvic floor physical therapist.
- You can find a pelvic floor physical therapist through the search tool at **pelvicrehab.com**

Worksheet for Managing Pain with Sexual Activities

You can reflect on these topics on your own or work through them with a partner(s)

COMMUNICATE	<p>What am I interested in? What would feel good to me?</p> <p>What am I concerned about? Does anything make me feel like holding back?</p>
DECREASE STRESS	<p>How will I get rest and de-stress before sex?</p>
LUBRICATE	<p>What lubricant and/or aids will I use?</p>
POSITION	<p>What position or positions will I try?</p> <p>What will I do if the first position I try doesn't work out?</p>
ALTERNATIVES	<p>What will I try if a sexual activity I like doesn't feel good right now?</p> <p>What are other ways I can enjoy being sexual?</p>
HELP	<p>Who can I reach out to if I am having problems with pain during sexual activities?</p>