Orgasms and making babies? [1]

Dear Alice,

Do you and your husband both have to orgasm in order to get pregnant?

Answer

Dear Reader,

The quick answer to your question is no ? orgasm is not necessary for someone to become pregnant. It may, however, make the baby-making experience more exciting! Conception and pregnancy are typically dependent on the convergence of a few factors: namely, a healthy egg, healthy sperm, and favorable cervical mucus all being in the same place at the same time. Penis-in-vagina intercourse is the most practiced method for getting the egg and sperm together; however, check out Sperm motility [2] for alternate routes of joining the two (e.g., in vitro fertilization). The role of orgasm as it relates to penile-vaginal intercourse and conception, no matter what your anatomy, is still highly up for debate.

With that being said, there?s some interesting research on how orgasm may increase the likelihood of pregnancy. Orgasm is thought to heighten the sperm-meets-egg probability by both positively reinforcing ejaculation from the penis (in other words, making the ejaculate shoot further), as well as increasing uterine contractions. These pelvic contractions happen due to the presence of oxytocin, which is released from the brain during orgasm. Uterine contractions help sperm towards the goal of fertilizing an egg by moving them up the vaginal canal and into the uterus.

Here?s something else to ponder: Women are much more likely to experience orgasm from clitoral stimulation [3] than from vaginal-only penetration. The vaginal wall contains relatively few nerve endings (unlike the clitoris which contain 6,000 ? 8,000 nerve endings), making the in-and-out of intercourse less likely to lead to the big ?O? for many women. Unless, of course, there?s some simultaneous touching, pressing, or other type of clitoral stimulation happening. So, biologically speaking, the ?purpose? of female orgasm in terms of baby-making isn?t clear, beyond the very simplistic (yet important) element of pleasure.

Penile orgasms on the other hand are very common with vaginal intercourse. And while ejaculation can occur without orgasm, the co-occurrence lends itself more strongly to the idea that this type of orgasm has a purpose beyond pleasure.

All those fun facts aside, there has yet to be any definitive studies that show a connection between orgasm and fertility trends. As far as we know now, orgasm is less of an evolutionary
tool and more of a sexual bonus.

Enjoy!

Alice!

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