Dear Alice,

I recently started dating a woman and when I gave her oral sex the first time, it smelled very musty. I didn't want to offend her so the next date I planned a bath for us so I could bathe her and I'd be sure of her vagina being clean. But within an hour I was giving her oral sex and the smell was still there although not as strong. I had asked her when her period was due and she told me not for two weeks. Women before when I've done this never had an odor right after a bath. I've only been with her a short time and like her very much and want to continue the relationship, but I don't want to offend her by bringing this issue up, but at the same time I don't know if I could get used to it? Please tell me how to solve this problem or what I could say that wouldn't offend her.

Thank you!

Answer

Dear Reader,

Every woman's vaginal aroma, fluids, and taste are unique; they can even change throughout her monthly cycle. Women need to be familiar with their own scent to be able to detect any differences that may be a cause for concern. As a woman's partner becomes more familiar with her body, s/he also might be able to detect these changes. However, since you recently started dating this woman, and are unsure if the "musty" smell is her "usual" scent, planning a sensuous bath was a good way to handle the situation initially without offending her.

Because the scent lingered after the bath, but not as strongly, it's possible that this is this woman's natural aroma. It is also possible that something is causing the "musty" smell. Some women who have a strong, sour or fishy odor emitting from their vagina may have an infection. Infections can be caused by several factors, including vaginal bacterial overgrowth, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), or from wearing tight or damp clothing, particularly those made of synthetic material (e.g., nylon pantyhose) that does not allow the area around the vulva to breathe. Others may have an odor as a result of certain foods in their eating plan or from excessive sweating. The odor may also be from her anus, rather than her vagina.

There is no easy way to approach the situation, but it may be better to broach the topic during a casual conversation rather than while you are sexually intimate. One way to approach the issue is by sensitively saying something like, "I want to mention something that is hard to talk about. I really like you, and I enjoy getting to know your body and giving you pleasure. I know
that every woman has their own scent, and since I'm becoming more familiar with your body, I'm wondering if this is your usual smell. I've noticed that it's strong and I'm having trouble getting used to it." Depending on her response, you can ask her if she has noticed a change. If so, suggest that she might want to visit a health care provider to be sure that everything is okay. Once you have talked about it, and depending upon her reaction, you might want to share some of the related Q&As listed below with her. You can also approach the situation indirectly by saying something like, "Since we are sexual with one another, I think it would be a good idea to get tested for STIs. What do you think?" If you raise this issue, however, be willing to get tested. The reason why this approach may be helpful is that some tests for bacterial STIs are detected through a culture specimen of the cervix. It is likely that if there is any type of bacterial infection, it will be detected.

If your woman's "musty" smell is her signature scent, you may get used to her unique smell and taste with time or opportunity. You may begin to associate her smell with her pleasure (and yours). People also can tolerate odors better when they themselves are aroused. Plus, keeping some of your saliva in your mouth and breathing through your mouth will both reduce your sense of smell. You can also try using scented lubricant to mask the "mustiness."

Be gentle when you talk to your partner and make sure to let her know how much you are into her.

Good luck!

Alice!

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