Resuming intercourse after childbirth? How long do we need to wait? [1]

Dear Alice,

Your site is quite interesting to say the least. You have some great answers for some good questions. My dilemma has to do with our child being born. My wife had a c-section and her wound has healed. I am quite anxious to jump back into bed with her. It has been almost three weeks and I just can't wait any longer. Would it be ok if we continued our lovemaking? If not, how much longer should I wait?

Thanks,
Anxious

Answer

Dear Anxious,

Congratulations on the birth of your child! In terms of jumping back in the sack, most health care providers suggest waiting for at least six weeks after childbirth (either vaginal or by C-section) before having vaginal or anal intercourse again. Some health care providers make an additional recommendation that it's best to wait until the woman is no longer be experiencing vaginal bleeding before she resumes having intercourse. After a C-section, an incision may appear healed, but still be vulnerable to stress, and a woman's internal organs are not yet be back to normal, either. Your wife's obstetrician or midwife can explain her or his rationale, based upon your wife's individual pregnancy and delivery.

Some health care providers ask women to wait until after their six-week check-up so that there is certainty that healing has occurred, to decrease the chance of infection, and to avoid discomfort or pain. On the other hand, some couples are eager to have some kind of sex together so they do not wait till the six-week check-up. If you are both ready to become sexual with each other again, and the six weeks haven't passed, outercourse options and/or oral sex can be fulfilling and pleasurable after childbirth.

Before resuming sex with your wife, it's important to find out how she feels about things. Does she feel physically, emotionally and/or psychologically ready to resume lovemaking? Giving birth and caring for a new baby are huge, exhausting life events. In addition to healing from the C-section, hormone shifts and sleep deprivation in the weeks after birth are important factors. Have a frank conversation with your wife to find out how she's feeling about resuming
intercourse with you.

You mentioned that you "just can't wait any longer." What would happen if you needed to wait longer before having intercourse? Partners in similar positions masturbate to take the pressure off, so that they can get their own needs met and not put pressure on their partners. This is where negotiating and finding common ground are so important. If it's okay with your wife, you can masturbate with her ? next to her, against her, or with her touching, kissing, and/or talking with you. All this is to be worked out together. There are ways to ensure that your needs are taken care of, if not by your wife, then by yourself. Your wife also has needs (sexual and otherwise), and your new baby certainly has needs, so if your wife can't meet your needs at this time, then it's important to take care of yourself. Hopefully, this leaves you with the "relief" you need so that you and your wife can be loving and tender with each other as partners and as parents.

Alice!
Category:
Sexual & Reproductive Health [2]
Reproduction [3]
Pregnancy [4]

Related questions

What is outercourse? [5]
Why can't a woman have sex for a few weeks after an abortion? [6]
Orgasms After Childbirth [8]
Sex positions as pregnancy progresses [9]
We're pregnant: Can we still have sex? [10]

Published date:
Apr 11, 2003
Last reviewed on:
Mar 25, 2015
support services and hotlines.

Source URL: http://www.goaskalice.columbia.edu/answered-questions/resuming-intercourse-after-childbirth-%E2%80%94-how-long-do-we-need-wait#comment-0

Links
[10] http://www.goaskalice.columbia.edu/answered-questions/were-pregnant-can-we-still-have-sex