Masturbation while being sick? [1]

Hi, Wondering if there are any negative effects to masturbation while being sick. I hear it could be a cause of lower immunity levels, is that true? Thanks, R

Answer

Dear R,

For males, there is some evidence that trace amounts of nutrients may be lost during ejaculation, but it appears so far that the good outweighs the bad when it comes to masturbation and health. Sadly, research on nutrient loss through vaginal fluids has not been conducted to date, so we know less about the immune system response in women during masturbation and orgasm.

What we know is that for all genders, masturbation has a great deal of health benefits. Masturbation can be a:

- Muscle relaxant
- Sleep aid
- Stress-reducer
- Sexual educator (e.g. helping you learn what you like, how you orgasm, etc)
- Mood-enhancer (via opioid-like neurotransmitter-release in the brain)
- Self-esteem booster
- And yes, an immune-system enhancer (at least for males, on whom this research has been conducted on exclusively)

All of this with no side effects! If a pill could do all that, the pharmaceutical companies would be battling for the patent. But luckily for us, all these benefits come (no pun intended) free of charge. Research indicates that some types of white blood cells are increased in the blood stream during masturbation, during both the sexual stimulation and orgasm stages. Other types of white blood cells remain unaffected, but none are depleted. This is interesting since both female and male ejaculate contain a substantial amount of antibodies.

Research (also done exclusively on males, which again, is unfortunate) indicates that trace amounts of nutrients that are vital for immune function, such as zinc, copper, and some vitamins, are lost during ejaculation. So if you are sick, it may be beneficial to take a supplement or to make sure you are eating lots of zinc, copper, or vitamin-rich foods (such as dark leafy greens), especially if you are going to be engaging in a lot of sexual activity, with a partner or solo.
Otherwise, fear not. Your solo pastime need not be sacrificed due to illness. It may even speed your recovery along.

Here’s to health and hands,

Alice!

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Sexual & Reproductive Health
Masturbation

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