Laxative effects of ingesting ejaculate

(1) Dear Alice,

I have asked this question to many sites with no response, but came (sorry :) ) upon your site which seems to be willing to post just about any question and answer them too, so here goes:

Is there a laxative effect of ingested ejaculate, or is it ALL in my head (oh gosh, another one :) )? I have found that when I ingest my own ejaculate, almost invariably within a matter of a few minutes, I have loose bowels.

(2) Dear Alice,

My boyfriend and I have been exploring oral sex for a couple months ? but I've only just noticed that when I swallow I seem to experience a bout of diarrhea within a couple hours of doing so. Is it normal to have diarrhea from swallowing ejaculate?

Answer

Dear Reader #1 and Reader #2,

Though others may have found this question hard to swallow (ba-dum-tcchh!), having the strength to be open about this is admirable. Finding yourself with a case of the runs can certainly put a damper on your whole sexual experience. While a semen allergy is one possible cause of dicey bowels, such allergies are quite rare. Perhaps you?ll be relieved to hear that it?s more likely that your diarrhea is coincidental or related to some other aspect of your sexploration rather than a semen allergy. Nerves, an aversion to the taste, or exposure to fecal matter are just a few possible alternative explanations.

To give you the low down, male ejaculate consists of fructose sugar, water, and a variety of other proteins ? none of which are considered to have laxative properties. In fact, semen is non-toxic and safe to ingest \[2\] even in quantities larger than the one to two teaspoons that the average man ejaculates. Some enterprising connoisseurs have even published recipes using the stuff! If you, too, enjoy this ?crème de la crème? and want to be able to swallow rather than spit, consider taking inventory of other contextual factors to try to pinpoint the root of your unsettled bowels. There are many possible causes of diarrhea that could be at play:

- **Do you feel nervous about sex or swallowing?** Some people experience diarrhea when they are fraught with nerves \[3\]. Even if you?re enjoying your sexual activities, nervous excitement can translate into a dash to the bathroom. Finding ways to relax or
working with a health educator or mental health care provider could help.

- **Have you recently been visiting other downstairs chambers prior to swallowing?** If you’ve been partaking in anal sex, rimming, anal fingering, or other backdoor romps alone or with a partner, the source of your gastrointestinal frenzy could be due to exposure to the bacteria in fecal matter. You may find that practicing safe and clean anal play [4] (using a condom, washing the penis/finger/toy afterwards, etc.) may eliminate those diarrheal bouts that you thought were due to swallowing semen.

- **Do you dislike the taste?** Just like any other food or drink, if you don’t like the taste of ejaculate, it might cause some unexpected reactions. Exploring your sexuality alone or with a partner should be enjoyable. If you’re just not groovin’ on the taste, consider other sexual or masturbatory activities you do enjoy!

- **What else have you consumed before swallowing?** Just had a big meal? Haven’t eaten all day? Perhaps it’s the motion of the ocean during sexual activities that’s making you feel unsettled rather than the act of ingesting semen itself. Solving this mystery could be as simple as figuring out the best way to take care of your stomach beforehand.

If none of these possibilities seem plausible for you, it may be time to reach out to your health care provider. There are two possible allergies to semen that might also cause diarrhea, although both are quite rare and not well understood by researchers:

- **Human seminal plasma (HSP) allergy** is an allergic reaction to the proteins in semen. HSP allergy has largely only been studied in women who are allergic to their partner’s semen, and it’s most common from ages 20 to 30. Although some will have a localized reaction (such as itchiness where the semen touches), more often they experience a whole body reaction, which can include respiratory distress, hives, and gastrointestinal symptoms like diarrhea. HSP allergies can be managed by using condoms when having sex (including oral sex) to avoid contact with semen or undergoing immunotherapy with a health care provider to reduce a sensitivity to semen.

- **Postorgasmic illness syndrome (POIS)** is thought to be the experience of flu-like symptoms that develop after a man ejaculates. The idea is that the tissue of the man’s urinary tract reacts to his own semen, causing the immune system to respond. However, this sort of reaction would occur nearly every time a man ejaculates? not just after consuming your own semen.

No matter what the cause of your less-than-desirable reactions to swallowing semen, you may find that chatting with a health care provider could help. Even if the cause remains a mystery, s/he may help you find ways to manage your symptoms.

Alice!
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