Dear Alice-

I have a question for you about sex that may seem a little silly. I had a cold recently with a badly running nose. My boyfriend and I started having sex. While we were having sex, my nose stopped running completely. After we were done, my nose started running again. Do you know the reason for this?

? Sniffling

Answer

Dear Sniffling,

If you're looking for a method to stop your running nose, taking some cold medicine may be more practical than having continuous sex, though probably not as much fun. A runny nose occurs because the small blood vessels in your nose are swollen and irritated. Your nose may have stopped running during sex if you were in a prone, horizontal position, similar to not having to blow your nose as much at night when you are lying down. It may be that lying in a prone position somehow reduces the dripping.

More likely, your nose stopped running temporarily because of the effects of adrenaline, a hormone also known as epinephrine. Any type of physical activity (including sex), stress, and fear trigger the release of adrenaline by the adrenal gland. Adrenaline's actions include constricting blood vessels in the skin, increasing blood flow to muscles, and opening up airways. Regarding your runny nose, adrenaline helps shrink the mucous membranes of your nose, reducing your nasal congestion. In this way, adrenaline acts as a temporary natural decongestant.

Once exercise (or sex) is over, adrenaline levels will recede and your symptoms will likely return. So while having sex or other physical activity may not cure your runny nose, the temporary reprieve it can provide may be just what you're looking for!

Sending sniffle-free wishes,

Alice!
Related questions

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