

## Healthy Sex Life Before & After Childbirth

### Can sex life go on during pregnancy? Will the foetus be affected?

- Being affected by nausea and/or vomiting during early pregnancy, the growing belly and the misconception that sexual activities affect the foetus, sex desire of the expectant mother may be suppressed.
- Unless signs of miscarriage show up in the first trimester or placenta praevia (means placenta lying in the lower part of the uterus) is diagnosed in the mid or late trimesters, sexual intercourse will not increase the chance of miscarriage. An expectant mother can continue with her sex life. The process of intercourse does not affect the foetus if overly vigorous gestures and pressure on the abdomen are avoided.
- Distending pain in the lower abdomen, vaginal bleeding or leakage of amniotic fluid are abnormal signs during sexual intercourse. If any of these occur, sexual activities have to be stopped immediately and medical consultation should be sought as soon as possible.
- From 36th week of pregnancy onwards, vaginal intercourse is undesirable due to the risk of premature rupture of membrane.

### What postures can be used for sex life during pregnancy?

- During early pregnancy, all postures can be adopted (see diagrams).
- When an expectant mother reaches her second trimester, with a growing and protruding belly, she should pay attention not to have her abdomen under pressure or gestures that are too vigorous. Postures suitable to use include face side-by-side, kneeling back as well as face-to-face sit-up.
- In late gestation, rear entry can be adopted and partner should show his care and affection as support.
- Apart from lovemaking, the couple can attain sexual satisfaction and physical pleasure by other means such as cuddling, caressing and kissing.
- Use of condom during intercourse can reduce the chance of contracting sexually transmitted diseases.

## Safe posture for gestation

### Posture for early gestation

Normal position:  
Man supports his body with his arms



Stretching position:  
Avoid deep penetration and pressure on woman's belly



### Posture for mid gestation

Face side-by-side position:  
Shallow penetration, no pressure on woman's belly



Kneeling back position:  
No pressure on woman's belly, man can control the depth of penetration



Face-to-face sit-up position:  
Woman can control the depth of penetration

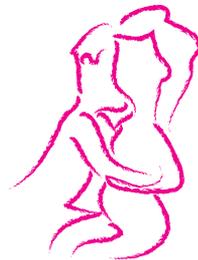


### Posture for late gestation

Back side-by-side position:  
Shallow penetration, no pressure on woman's belly



Caressing the head & neck



Massaging man's genitalia



### **When can sex life be resumed after delivery?**

- After giving birth, the body needs some time to revert back to pre-pregnancy state. This period, called puerperium, generally lasts for 6 weeks.
- When puerperium is over, lochia will clear, uterus will return to its natural size, uterine lining will recover, cervix will close, vaginal membrane will return to normal and wound on abdomen or perineum will be healed. At this time, sex life can be resumed if the mother is emotionally and physically ready.

### **What should be noted in resuming sexual intercourse?**

- When resuming sexual intercourse after delivery, the mother will sometimes experience dryness in her vagina as well as mild pain or strange feeling at the perineum. The reasons are mostly psychological. She can get use to it gradually after a few times of intercourse and these discomforts will fade away naturally.
- Overly vigorous gestures and deep penetration at the early resumption of sex life should be avoided. Priority should be given to what feels good for the mother.
- Medical examination should be sought if there is bleeding, pain or difficulties during intercourse.

### **Will the wound be ripped apart by sexual activities after delivery?**

- Generally speaking, the perineal wound will be healed after the puerperium. Therefore sexual intercourse will not result in wound gaping.

- Obstetric departments of HA run regular antenatal exercise classes; pregnant women may contact MCHC or HA for details
- Some obstetric departments of HA offer accompany labour, please contact your obstetric hospital for arrangement



Reminder