

YES, YOU CAN

HAVE POSTPARTUM SEX AGAIN!

Just about everything is challenging when you welcome a new baby. This little one requires every ounce of your time, your energy, your patience- all your physical and emotional resources. At Maze, we know it's not uncommon for new parents to struggle sexually, at least for a little while. Why does this happen, and what can you do about it? ***Read on to find out why you are likely in the sexuality weeds, and how you can find your escape hatch!***

WHAT IS THE POSTPARTUM PERIOD, AND HOW LONG DOES IT LAST?

This "Fourth Stage" of Labor and Delivery starts after the baby is born and is considered to last until the uterus returns to its normal pear-shaped size. While this process takes about 6 weeks, clinical researchers consider this period lasting at least up until the baby's first birthday.

WHY IS POSTPARTUM SEX SO PHYSICALLY CHALLENGING?

Let's start with our own physiology. Hormonal levels drop more dramatically after birth than at any other time in a woman's life and can wreak havoc in both physical and emotional ways. Physical recovery from birth is paramount and must be respected. Intercourse is commonly off limits until 6 weeks postpartum. Many women are too leaky/sore/fatigued/emotional, etc. to even consider sexual engagement until after this stage is over. Additionally, pelvic or vaginal



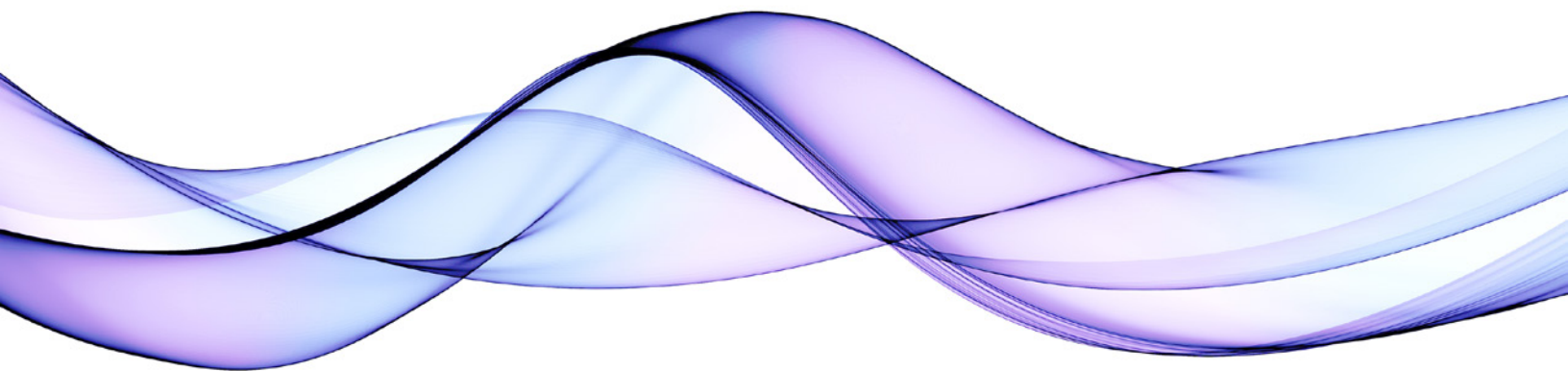
pain is not uncommon. Your body has been through a marathon of intense sensation over a period of hours (and sometimes, days). Yes, we are designed to do this, but we don't experience it every day. Also, women who breastfeed might encounter a decrease in libido and increase in vaginal dryness. Body image may also come into play for some new moms, especially if they were ever bullied or made to feel less than pre-pregnancy.

“Despite the complexity and significance of this subject, health providers often neglect sexual aspects during pregnancy and postpartum¹”

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HOW CAN I THINK ABOUT SEX WHEN I'M ON AN EMOTIONAL ROLLER COASTER?

1 in 7 new mothers experience a Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorder (which can be anything from the Baby Blues to a more serious experience with depression or anxiety). And this doesn't just happen to biological mothers; moms who welcome their babies via adoption and surrogacy and even partners can struggle emotionally as well.



SURE, I'VE HAD SEX WHEN I'M TIRED. BUT THIS KIND OF TIRED IS NEXT LEVEL

ALL parents will be challenged by copious amounts of unrelenting exhaustion. And we humans aren't at our best when we're stressed and sleep-deprived, especially when it comes to interpersonal communication. We become short-tempered and easily frustrated with our partners and that's just not sexy.

WHAT'S BECOMING A PARENT GOT TO DO WITH IT?

Adjustment to parenthood is epic in just about every way. There is no other life event that triangulates colossal fatigue, utter cluelessness and weighty responsibility for keeping another human alive the way that parenting does.

1. Gutzeit, O; Levy, G; Lowenstein, L. (2019). Postpartum Female Sexual Function: Risk Factors for Postpartum Sexual Dysfunction. *Sex Med.* 2020 Mar; 8(1): 8–13.

HOW DO I PARENT WELL AND GET BACK TO ME?

First of all, give yourself a giant pat on the back for acknowledging how challenging all of this is. Honor your feelings and all that you are doing while you adjust to parenthood. It took time to grow that baby, and it takes time to walk through this transition.

Treating any sexual health issue requires trusted clinical guidance, self-compassion and patience. If you are facing sleep deprivation, lack of arousal, stress, pelvic health concerns or communication problems with your partner after birth, don't sweep it under the rug (because you're not gonna have much time to sweep up much of anything). Reach out to our perinatal specialist at Maze; she can help you get back on track when you are ready both physically and emotionally. After all, there's no reason why you can't enjoy your new addition AND a satisfying sex life!

“I was all touched out. I loved my baby, but holding a human being 24-7 is challenging. Once she was asleep, I had nothing left to give to anyone else.”

FIND OUT MORE

- *Experiencing dryness or other changes down there?*
See why it could be your hormones.
- *Having pain or discomfort with sex?*
Learn about treatment.
- *Not feeling in the mood lately?*
Loss of libido is common. Find out more.



If you're feeling unsure about your sex life, **contact us for a free phone consultation**. Our sexual health specialists are more than happy to help!

