

POST BABY HANKY PANKY? FOR SOME WOMEN, IT'S PAINFUL.

Pain during sex in pregnancy and postpartum is common, you might wonder: **“Is this normal?”**, **“how long will the pain last?”**, and **“what can help?”**

> [Obstet Gynecol.](#) 2022 Mar 1;139(3):391-399. doi: 10.1097/AOG.0000000000004662.

Trajectories of Dyspareunia From Pregnancy to 24 Months Postpartum

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*Scroll to see
what we found!*



WE WANTED TO KNOW:



1

Is new mothers' pain during vaginal intercourse—called dyspareunia—captured by one or multiple patterns of change over time?

2

What factors predict these patterns of change?

WHAT DID WE DO?

582

Women recruited at their
20 month ultra sound in
Halifax, NS



Mothers completed online surveys at 20 and 32 weeks gestation, and again at 3-, 6-, 12- and 24-months postpartum. We also collected relevant medical information.

WE FOUND THAT...

Pain during sex was common, ranging from 31% of people reporting pain at 3 months postpartum to 12% at 2 years postpartum.

AND...

21% **experienced moderate pain** when they attempted vaginal intercourse.



WE ALSO FOUND ...

No evidence that biomedical factors (like prior chronic pain or vaginal tearing) played a role in predicting minor or moderate pain



HOWEVER...

We **did find** that those who had negative thoughts and feelings about pain at 3-months postpartum were **more** likely to experience moderate + persistent pain

This is also known as pain catastrophizing

SO, WHAT DOES ALL OF THIS MEAN?

Our study suggests that **1 in 5** women report moderate and persistent pain during sex while pregnant and up to 2 years postpartum, which can **limit their ability to experience the benefits of a satisfying sexual relationship.**



SO, WHAT DOES ALL OF THIS MEAN?

Results from this study can be used to help identify who is at risk of persistent pain difficulties and might benefit from early intervention, particularly those who are having a lot of negative thoughts and feelings about the pain and its impacts.



SO, WHAT DOES ALL OF THIS MEAN?

You are not alone if you're experiencing this pain

- Talk with your healthcare professional!
- There are **proven ways** to **help manage the pain**, including cognitive-behavioral therapy, pelvic floor physical therapy, and topical medications



This is a summary of our published article:

Rosen, N. O., Dawson, S. J., Binik, Y. M., Pierce, M., Brooks, M., Pukall, C., Chorney, J., Snelgrove-Clarke, E., & George, R. (2022). Predictors of two trajectories of dyspareunia from pregnancy to 24 months postpartum. *Obstetrics & Gynecology*.
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