

MINDFULNESS AND BODY IMAGE IN FIRST-TIME PARENTS

Exploring the impact of mindfulness facets in both partners' perceptions of mothers' body throughout the perinatal period.

> [Body Image](#). 2023 Mar;44:187-196. doi: 10.1016/j.bodyim.2023.01.002. Epub 2023 Jan 26.

Longitudinal associations between mindfulness and changes to body image in first-time parent couples

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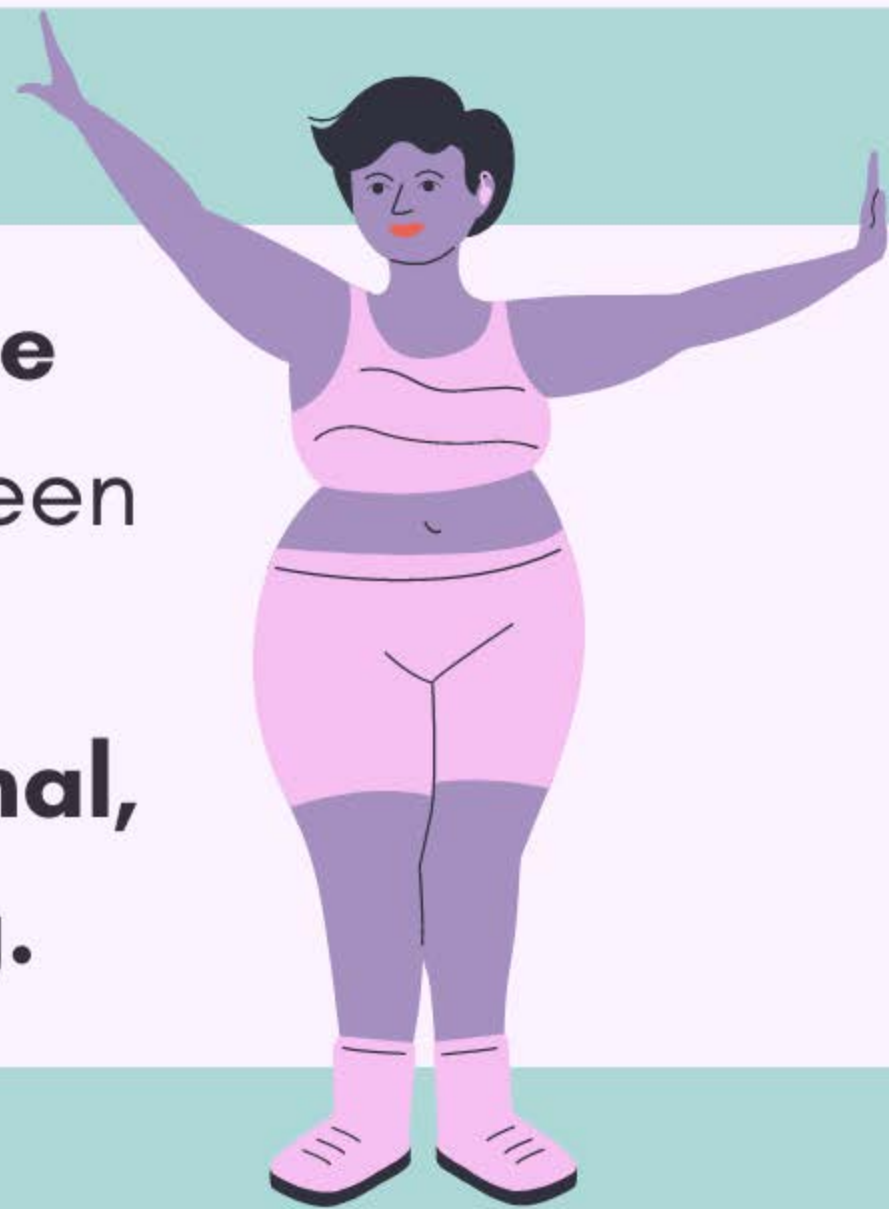


*Scroll to see
what we found!*



Across the perinatal period—the time during pregnancy up until one year postpartum—**pregnant partners' body image typically declines.**

- **Poorer own body image** during this period has been linked to **lower psychological, relational, and sexual functioning.**



What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness is characterized by purposeful, nonjudgmental awareness of present-moment internal experiences, thoughts, & emotions.

The Five Facets of Mindfulness:



Observing – Noticing inner experiences.

Describing – Putting feelings into words.

Acting With Awareness – Noticing current experiences without acting impulsively.

Non-Judgement – Noticing personal experiences, thoughts & feelings without judgment.

Non-Reactivity to Inner Experience – Noticing inner experiences without necessarily reacting.

WE WANTED TO KNOW:



Q: Can mindfulness help both parents in a relationship to maintain more positive perceptions of the mother's body over time?

WHAT WE DID:

We recruited **257 new parent couples** and collected data from **mid-pregnancy until 6 months postpartum**.

Part 1: We measured each partner's **mindfulness facets** during the second trimester.



Part 2: At four different points, we examined ratings of **mothers' own body image** and **partner's perceptions of mother's bodies**.



WE FOUND THAT...

Both partners' perceptions of mothers' body were positively associated.

However,

Mothers' positive body image **worsened** over time, whereas partners' perceptions **remained stable**.

We also found,

Mindfulness facets were associated with mothers' and fathers' more positive perceptions of the mothers' body in pregnancy.

And,

Mothers' mindfulness facets impacted how their body image perceptions **evolved over time**.



So, what does all of this mean?

- It might be **valuable for partners to share their perceptions with mothers** due to their **critical influence on how birthing mothers feel about their bodies** throughout this transitional period.



**It's important to feel
valued by your partner,**

and having a **positive body image can
enhance sexual wellbeing** by increasing
self-confidence, comfort with physical
intimacy, and sexual satisfaction.



This is a summary of our published article:

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