

Your sex questions, answered.

When it comes to talking about your sex life with your GP or gynaecologist, there is no such thing as a silly question. In fact, the more questions you ask and the more your doctor knows about your health, the better care you're likely to receive. So, if you've got a niggling question about sex or your health in general, ask your doctor, *not* Dr Google.

Here are some of the common questions that Jean Hailes gynaecologist Dr Elizabeth Farrell gets asked in her work, along with her answers and links to Jean Hailes' evidence-based information.

Why do I have low libido?

Libido, also known as your 'sex drive', varies from woman to woman and there is no right or wrong level, only what is right for you. It is absolutely normal for your libido to rise and fall throughout your life.

Libido is affected by many things; for example, your hormone levels, any medication you may be taking, your health, lifestyle changes and what's happening in your relationship.

If you feel your low libido is a problem, start by thinking about what a normal level of libido is for you. Then think about when it might have changed and what else was (or is) happening around that time. There are a number of things women can do to improve their libido; finding the right solution often involves working out what may be causing the change. Talk to your GP or [read more about libido](#).

How much vaginal secretion is normal during sex?

An increase in vaginal secretions is a normal and healthy part of being turned on and being sexual. Some women worry they become too 'wet' when they are aroused, but usually this is nothing to be concerned about – it's just the body preparing itself for sex.

In fact, it's very common for women to have the opposite issue and experience vaginal dryness – especially as a symptom of menopause. A lack of lubrication during sex can lead to vaginal or vulval irritation, pain and skin splitting.

Remember, vaginal secretions are there to protect these body parts and keep them healthy. [Read more about vulva and vaginal health](#), including what changes you need to look out for.

Should I worry if I bleed after sex?

If you experience vaginal bleeding or spotting after sex, make an appointment with your GP to discuss the issue. There are many different causes of bleeding after sex, from the simple to the more serious, so it's best to get it investigated.

The bleeding may be caused by:

- vaginal dryness or damage to the vagina or vulva
- an infection or a sexually transmitted infection (STI), such as chlamydia
- cervical or endometrial polyps (non-cancerous growths in the womb or the lining of the cervix)
- inflammation of cervical cells (also known as cervicitis)
- less commonly, it can be a sign of cervical or vaginal cancer.

So make sure you are up to date with your Pap tests and talk to your GP – they can advise you of the best course of action.

Sex is painful – what can I do?

Painful sex is distressing and can affect many areas of life. If you are experiencing painful sex, it is important to seek help from your doctor and receive the right treatment at the earliest time. It's also important to know that you're not alone. Painful sex is a common experience for many women and there is help available. [Learn more about painful sex.](#)

Will sex be different after childbirth?

Couples are usually advised to wait 4-6 weeks after giving birth to have sex again, but every couple is different. It's best to only start having sex again when you are comfortable. Often women experience pain for weeks or months after childbirth, and this can affect libido. So too can the tiredness, stress and new routines that often come with having a new baby.

But it's not all doom and gloom! Being kind and gentle to yourself after having a baby is key, as is communication with your partner. In the initial stages, many couples decide they are not yet ready for penetrative sex and instead enjoy alternatives such as cuddling, touching or oral sex. This is a great way of reintroducing sex to your lives without causing pain or discomfort.

Find more health information on these topics and more, by exploring the Jean Hailes [Sex & sexual health webpages](#).

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