Is it possible to have too much sex? [1]

Dear Alice,

Is it possible to have too much sex? I didn't see any content on nymphomania. Could you please explain it? Is it considered a disease or something? I'm beginning to think it's a bad thing having too much sex, but it's difficult to consider giving it up; just a mini vacation seems forever and this is for both of us!

J

Answer

Dear J,

A magic number doesn't answer the question, "How much sex is too much?", nor does a national average. Religion, culture, family values, and personal feelings and choice help define what each individual considers "enough" or "too much" sex. The question to consider is this: what makes you think your stats are off the charts? It sounds as if you're beginning to consider too much sex a bad thing. What's bad about it? Is it bad because it's unhealthy? Because your skin is tender? Because you're neglecting your school/work? Are you still eating and sleeping? Are you answering the mail and phone? Seeing your friends? Having fun? You need to begin this process by answering these questions, defining what you might consider to be "too much," and also identifying what's bad about it.

Generally speaking, each individual will need to talk with her/his partner about frequency of sex. Keep in mind that people define sex differently. Do you mean intercourse? Oral sex? Something else? It is widely accepted that if too much sex means many different partners, then there are some specific risks to consider (STIs, HIV, etc.). Since you mention both of us? it sounds more like you are thinking about this issue as a concern related to frequency with the same partner.

Unless your sexual behavior is interfering with your daily routine, it is likely that you and your partner have high sex drives and enjoy having sex together during this time period. Good for you! Once you figure out or feel more comfortable with the frequency of your sex sessions, you and your partner won't need to take a mini vacation from them, but perhaps you'll consider planning a fabulous trip to a tropical island, in reality or in your imagination.

Since you asked, nymphomania is not a disease or a clinical condition. More generically
known as "promiscuity," nymphomania is a word that refers specifically to women who have an "excessive" or "insatiable sex drive." For men, the equivalent is known as Satyriasis or Don Juanism. Often, the term "nympho" is used in a derogatory way. In some instances, a woman may be called a "nympho" because she enjoys sex. In other instances, a woman might get stuck with this label by a partner who feels inadequate about his or her sexual desire or performance. Levels of sexual desire vary, as does the way they are perceived.

When having sex is seen as one's sole priority, resulting in the neglect of other important facets of life (e.g., working, socializing, and sleeping), a compulsion to sex [2] is considered. Sexual compulsivity includes any sexual behavior when "had" or done in an obsessive, uncontrollable, and/or irrational way that can become self-destructive. People with this diagnosis feel, and indeed may have, little or no control over sex, and medication may be in order. Sexual compulsion may include frequency of sex, a wide number of partners, or even excessive masturbation. Again, the major criterion here is when sexual activity interferes with daily activities or responsibilities. For most people with a high sex drive there is no problem finding balance between responsibilities and finding time to enjoy sex.

If you still think you are having too much sex or if sex is getting in the way of daily activities, you may want to speak to a counselor. Columbia University students on the Morningside campus can contact Counseling and Psychological Services [3] and students on the Medical Center campus can reach out to the Mental Health Service [4].

Take care,

Alice!

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