

## Can a man tell if a woman orgasms? <sup>[1]</sup>

Dear Alice,

I was wondering if it were possible for a man to tell if a woman has had an orgasm. If so, how noticeable is it to a man and is there a substantial amount of fluid involved in a woman's orgasm?

— an uniformed pre-orgasmic

### **Answer**

Dear an uniformed pre-orgasmic,

For those wondering, "Which came first: the chicken or the egg?" consider this: how do you know that either came at all? Unlike the chicken and egg, it's possible to find out whether a partner orgasmed by asking them. Communicating during sexual encounters not only clarifies whether a partner has orgasmed, but it may also make for more fulfilling experiences and climaxes for all parties involved. There isn't any one telltale sign that someone has reached the big O other than asking. Also, keep in mind that sexual experiences don't have the same destination for everyone; some may be looking to climax, while others prefer the journey. To answer your other question, orgasms aren't always accompanied by a release of fluid; there can be different amounts of vaginal lubrication and ejaculate involved within and between encounters for every person. Read on for more information about orgasms and to know if a partner has experienced one.

While there's no way to know whether someone has orgasmed without asking or being told, understanding the science behind the experience may offer clues as to whether you've witnessed the big O show. As someone assigned female at birth approaches orgasm, a sexual partner may feel tightening in the pelvic area and notice their heart rate, blood pressure, and respiration increasing. Additionally, some people may produce vaginal fluid or lubrication during arousal or orgasm. Some may also produce an ejaculate (which is separate from the vaginal fluid or lubrication). The occurrence and amount of these can vary by person and encounter. During orgasm, their bodies often experience a series of rhythmic contractions in the uterus, vagina, and pelvic floor muscles, typically in response to clitoral or vaginal stimulation, though others find that the stimulation of other body parts can increase the likelihood of an orgasm. Following orgasm, the body relaxes, and heart rate, blood pressure, and respiration begin to return to its usual patterns. It can be helpful to note that while this pattern of experiencing orgasm is common for

many, others may experience it differently. For more information about the differences in orgasm based on sex, check out [Male and female orgasm — different?](#) [2] in the *Go Ask Alice!* archives.

Although these signs and the science behind orgasms may shed light on whether one has occurred, the only true way to know is by communicating, which can take place before, during, and after orgasm (attempted or achieved). Before engaging in sexual activity, consider asking your partner what feels good, whether or not they've experienced an orgasm before, or if orgasming is even their goal (which it may not be — and that's okay!). During sexual activity, look for cues that your partner is enjoying themselves, while at the same time keeping in mind that everyone experiences pleasure differently and it may not look the same every time and can change even within the experience. You can also communicate with them more explicitly during the experience to find out what they are or aren't enjoying. Afterward, you might ask your partner about their experience and share your own. Not only does asking show that you care about making them feel good, it also makes space for you to engage in open communication about what each partner does and doesn't like, which can improve the experience for both people. You may find it helpful to have a starting point — [Scarleteen's Sexual Inventory Stocklist](#) [3] is a great resource to help partners communicate about what they do or don't want in sexual experiences.

Remember: what makes someone orgasm one day may not do so the next. The same goes for how a person experiences an orgasm; a release of fluid once doesn't mean it'll happen the next time. Additionally, remember that orgasm isn't what some are trying to achieve during sexual activity and that a fulfilling sex life can be had whether or not orgasms are experienced. Learning what excites a partner may require experimenting through trial and error. For more information, check out the *Go Ask Alice!* [Orgasms](#) [4] section in the [Sexual and Reproductive Health](#) [5] archives.

Alice!

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