Dear Alice,

The service that you provide is very informative. Thank you for it. When I have sex with my girlfriend and I thrust my penis deep into her body, she says that she can feel it hit something hard inside her body. I can't feel it hit anything. She is very curious to know what it is that I am hitting. Could you shed some light on this issue?

Curious about her body

Answer

Dear Curious about her body,

Chances are that what your girlfriend feels is the pressure of your penis against her cervix. The cervix forms the base, or a sort of neck, of the uterus. On the flip side, it’s also considered the top of the vaginal canal. Your girlfriend can likely feel her cervix with her finger — if she slides her middle finger back along her vagina as far as possible, she will probably feel something like the tip of her nose with a small dimple in the middle (as described by Our Bodies, Ourselves). If what you’re hitting is her cervix, it may be an indicator of her level of arousal. It’s possible that she may not be fully aroused or that the penetration is too deep if your partner feels this pressure often. Typically, when a person with a vagina is aroused, their uterus and cervix will move upward into the body, lengthening the vaginal canal. This usually means there is a bit more space to accommodate penetration. It’s also the case that the cervix has fewer nerves than other reproductive parts; however, during deep penetration, a sensation of pressure on the cervix can sometimes be felt. Some folks may enjoy this sensation, but others may not be into it.

Further, if the sensation she’s describing is painful, it’s key to stop and check in with her about how she’s feeling and how to proceed when doing the deed. Not being aroused enough or not being into sex at the time can be associated with discomfort and pain during sex. There are also a number of other potential reasons a person may feel pain during sex and, more specifically, during deep penetration — conditions such as endometriosis, uterine prolapse, irritable bowel syndrome, fibroids, urinary tract infection (UTI), and ovarian cysts are just a few potential culprits. Having had pelvic surgery or cancer treatment may also result in painful sex for a person with a
vagina. All this to say, consider if any of these issues may speak to what your girlfriend is experiencing (i.e., the only way to know is to ask) and whether it may raise to the level of her getting it checked out by a health care provider.

On that note, while it's great to ask the anatomical questions, having a conversation with your partner about how sex feels for you both will help you have a deeper understanding of what you both deem pleasurable or not. In response to this sensation in particular: Does she enjoy it during penetration? Is the sensation uncomfortable? Is it painful? Is this sensation associated with particular positions? If the sensation isn’t enjoyable, are there other positions that are more comfortable and enjoyable for you both? Getting some answers to this question may help you both learn a bit more about what moves you both towards scintillating satisfaction and away from sidelining discomfort.

It’s clear that you have a desire to learn more about sexual anatomy; keep it up! A little curiosity can go a long way when it comes to pleasure and health!

Alice!

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