

## Multiple orgasms — Possible? <sup>[1]</sup>

Dear Alice,

Is it true that a woman can have multiple orgasms?

### **Answer**

Dear Reader,

While the idea of multiple orgasms may sound like a myth or fairytale, for some people, they are, in fact, real. This experience refers to orgasms that occur rapidly, one after the other, perhaps seconds apart. Within and across the gender spectrum, some folks can experience multiple orgasms, although it may be experienced differently depending on the sexual organs involved. Additionally, while some people may be able to experience orgasm multiple times, for some that may not be the goal or even be desirable.

When a person participates in sexual stimulation of some kind, with a partner or solo, they may go through the sexual response cycle. Generally, the sexual response cycle moves through desire, arousal, orgasm, and resolution. During the desire phase, breath quickens, skin flushes and blood flows to the sexual organs. In the arousal phase, blood continues to engorge the penis or vagina, muscle tension increases, and the clitoris retracts under the clitoral hood. Next comes, for many, a fan favorite — orgasm — in which the pelvic and vaginal muscles contract involuntarily and feelings of sexual tension are released (which usually results in a very pleasurable feeling). People with penises generally experience ejaculation of semen during orgasm, and sometimes people with vaginas ejaculate a fluid as well. The final phase of the sexual response cycle is resolution, where the body slowly returns to its usual functioning and appearance; during this phase individuals may also experience fatigue. It's worth noting that there are many ways to have sex and experience pleasure, so the sexual response cycle may not apply in all situations; however, it can be one helpful way to understand multiple orgasms. Other people may find they experience multiple orgasm in other ways.

Multiple orgasms tend to differ based on the genitalia of the person — physiologically, people with a clitoris and vagina can be aroused and can orgasm again and again. With repeated clitoral stimulation, they may be able to bounce between high arousal and orgasm until they feel that they're finished and choose to stop. That being said, there's wide variation amongst those with a

clitoris and vagina in terms of their ability to orgasm repeatedly or interest in doing so. Some folks can feel satisfied with only one orgasm, while others are eager for more, if they're able to orgasm or enjoy that experience at all.

While there's been less research on the subject, multiple orgasms are possible for those with penises, but they're far less common than for those with a vagina and clitoris. Individuals with penises can experience the high peaks of orgasm, while holding back their ejaculation and, just like with a vaginal orgasm, can "bounce" between high arousal and orgasm, and then back to high arousal. Research has indicated that factors such as delaying ejaculation, using psychostimulant drugs, having sex with multiple partners, and using sex toys were associated with multiple penile orgasms.

Multiple orgasms are possible, but not everyone experiences them and it may not be everyone's preference. Whether multiple orgasms are in the cards for a person or not, each body has unique and wonderful sexual and sensual capacities just waiting to be explored, and it's up to each person to discover what brings them joy and pleasure.

Alice!

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