Dear Alice,

While reading some of your responses to female arousal, you say that the clitoris is as sensitive as the penis. Why is it then that when I touch mine, I get only a little pleasure, if any? Yes, I know where the clitoris is, so that's not the problem. What's wrong with me?

-Curious

Answer

Dear Curious,

There is nothing wrong with you! The clitoris is a very special part of a woman’s anatomy, with the sole purpose of providing pleasure. However, every woman's body is unique and responds differently. Some women have pleasurable sensations when their clitoris is touched, kissed, rubbed, sucked, and pressed. Other women experience pleasure over time as a result of cultivating their clitoris through masturbation, either alone or with a partner. Yet there are also women who find that direct stimulation of the clitoris is uncomfortable. Just because women have a joy button that contains between 6,000 and 8,000 sensory nerve endings doesn't mean that when it is touched, it will send rockets to the moon.

You mentioned that touching your clitoris only provides a little pleasure, if any. Perhaps you need to get to know, well, you better? You might begin by gradually becoming more familiar with what turns you on — in order to be able to enjoy and derive pleasure from the experience. Since you already know where your clit is located, you are one step ahead of the game. The next move is to relax, alone or with a partner, heat your body up, and explore! Create an atmosphere to set the mood. You may want to light some candles or put on some music. Get comfortable. Be conscious of your breath and breathe deeply, as this will help you to relax. Slowly massage your entire body from head to toes. Begin by using fingertips, lightly or more firmly, to massage your scalp, then move on to your temples, face, neck, ears, shoulders, arms, hands, chest, torso, back, thighs, and legs. If you are alone — even if you are with a partner — you may find it helpful to fantasize. When you are ready and relaxed, run your hands over your vulva and clitoris. Do what feels comfortable for you. Take the time to get to know your body and what feels good to you by experimenting with different amounts of pressure and various strokes. You may even
want to insert fingers into your vagina and rub your clitoris at the same time. Perhaps using a water-based lube can help to heighten the sensations. Sex toys that provide direct contact with the clitoris might also feel good.

Chances are that this process will take time. When "getting into the groove," it may take some time to figure out the sensations that you find pleasurable. Remember, practicing can have great rewards.

For more information about the clitoris, check out Rebecca Chalker's book, The Clitoral Truth: The World At Your Fingertips. Or, for encouragement in your quest for pleasure, check out Betty Dodson Online or read her book, Sex for One: The Joy of Selfloving. You may also find tips at My Sex Professor or check out Debby Herbenick’s book Because It Feels Good. Enjoy the exploration and journey to finding what works for you!

Alice!

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