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Why can't a woman have sex for a few weeks after an abortion? ^[1]

Dear Alice,

I just want to know why is it, that after you get an abortion, you can't have sex for 2 or 3 weeks? My best friend got one, and she asked me if I could find out why, because she didn't ask; and she had sex, and it has only been a week today. So if you could email me, and tell me, that would be great!

Thank you!!!!

Cindy

Answer

Dear Cindy,

Your friend is lucky to have you to support her! After an abortion, which ends a pregnancy and removes tissues from the uterus, a woman's body needs 2 to 3 weeks to fully heal. After an abortion (or a miscarriage, or giving birth, for that matter) the tissues of the uterus and cervix may be more susceptible to infection for a period of time. Anything inserted into a woman's vagina while she is healing can expose the uterus and cervix to bacteria and/or other microorganisms that can cause infection. For the same reason, women are often advised to take showers rather than baths when healing. During this time, no penetration of any kind, including with tampons, sex toys, fingers, or douche, is recommended. And like your friend heard, women are encouraged to avoid vaginal sex, as well as receptive anal and oral sex.

Your friend likely has a follow-up medical visit scheduled between 2 to 4 weeks after the procedure. At the appointment, a health care provider will use sterile gloves and a speculum (if a pelvic exam is necessary) to check on the healing process. After the woman's health care provider gives her the okay, a woman can resume having sex and other penetrative activities.

Signs of infection include fever, chills, abdominal pain, and/or heavy vaginal discharge (though some women may experience abdominal cramps and vaginal bleeding without infection). A woman can expect her first regular period within six weeks of the abortion. If she notices signs of infection, or if she does not get her period within six weeks after the procedure, it's time for a visit

to her health care provider.

In the meantime, a woman can have [outercourse](#) [2], give oral and/or manual sex to a partner, and even orgasm while she is healing from the abortion. If having an orgasm produces uncomfortable cramping sensations, however, she may decide to postpone this until she has finished healing.

Most women are able to get pregnant again almost immediately after an abortion, so if a woman chooses to have sex right away, and wants to avoid another pregnancy, she should consider what birth control method(s) will serve her best. She also can use condoms (and dams or unlubed condoms for oral sex) in order to reduce the risk of infection during the healing period. However, health care providers strongly recommend that women wait until after the healing process has been completed before resuming penetration and having sex again.

The links below might help answer any other questions your friend might have. Keep up the good work in being a supportive, informative friend!

Alice!

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