

Libido and Breastfeeding – Where Did My Sex Drive Go?

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It would be a fair assumption to make, that as a new mother, you'd likely experience some sort of decline in your libido.

If it's not from the fact that you're exhausted from all the day-to-day demands of motherhood and sleep deprivation, you may be feeling all 'touched out' as a result of having a little bub on you all day.

The last thing you may want is your partner on you at night too!

Perhaps you're feeling a little insecure about your new mama figure, or you're a little edgy about sex if you've had a difficult or traumatic birth.

There are also some perfectly normal, biological reasons why your libido may be heading into negative territory.

Low libido and breastfeeding

Before you start panicking about your feelings for your partner or lack of motivation to have sex, here's what you need to know about your libido or sex drive while breastfeeding.

Low libido doesn't mean you aren't attracted to your partner

Some new mothers feel concerned when they discover they have absolutely no sex drive. They may even wonder if it's because they're no longer attracted to their partner.

There is no need to worry, as it's usually not the case.

If the usual demands and exhaustion of early motherhood haven't stopped you from getting in the mood, there are other factors to consider.

A big reason for low or no libido while breastfeeding is the result of some important hormones doing their dance in order for you to be able to breastfeed.

Here are some different ways hormones can be impacted.

Medications and low libido

If you're on anti-depressants, you may already know they can mess with your libido and orgasm.

Some forms of contraceptives are also well known to result in low libido.

Check with your doctor if you're taking any of these – you may like to ask for an alternative medication.

Prolactin and libido

Mother nature is truly clever – after you give birth, your body makes wonderful, nutritious breastmilk, which will be laying foundations for your baby's health for the rest of his or her life. This is courtesy of the hormone prolactin, which is responsible for telling your sex drive to take a hike.

As the name suggests, prolactin is important for lactation.

When your baby feeds, you produce more milk and your body also suppresses ovulation – everything is perfectly geared towards the survival of your gorgeous little baby, including preventing a pregnancy too soon.

Estrogen and libido

Just when you thought you had enough hurdles, here's another. While there is no ovulation going on, levels of estrogen are lowered as well, which is why breastfeeding mothers have little or no cervical mucus.

Vaginal dryness may be an issue – even if you feel like having sex or want to connect with your partner, it can make sex less enjoyable. Lubrication with water-based lubricant can be of great help. Make sure you tell your partner to go slow and take more time getting you aroused – which is a well-justified excuse for a nice long massage first! Without lubrication, sex may become uncomfortable or painful, which will likely result in even less desire to have sex again any time soon. BellyBelly recommends [Lariese Evolve Personal Organic Lubricant](#), which has no nasties.

When will I notice an increase in libido/sex drive?

As time goes on, the hormones needed for your regular menstrual cycle will start to build back up, and will overcome the cycle suppressing hormones. The length of time this takes is highly unique from woman to woman, and depends on several factors, including frequency of breastfeeding, dummy/pacifier use, formula use, and the amount of [solids](#) consumed.

As soon as you start ovulating again, you will likely notice an increase in libido at around ovulation time. It should fully return when the baby has weaned.

In the case that your libido has not returned after a lengthy period of time, you may like to visit your doctor and get your hormone levels checked (as well as other checks that impact energy,

for example, iron and thyroid function), or see a naturopath if you'd prefer to balance out hormones naturally.

Some women try to wean their baby prematurely to get their cycle and/or libido back sooner, but it's important to remember the gift you are giving your baby by providing him with breastmilk – and as a bonus, breastfeeding helps with weight loss and reduces your risk of breast cancer, amongst other things.

Should I have sex with my partner even though I have low libido/sex drive?

Low libido in any relationship can be such a sensitive topic to deal with. Some new mothers may feel guilty saying no to sex with their partner, who then feel rejected or unloved.

Some new mothers share that their partners try to pressure them into sex, or they get tired of their partner asking for sex.

However, it's important to communicate openly with your partner – it may be helpful to remind your partner (and yourself!) that you're doing a great job, giving your baby the best nutritional food available and this is a small pay off for now.

Before you know it, breastfeeding will be nothing but a fond memory. Low libido is not worth ending your breastfeeding journey over, because just like a baby's crying spells, your lack of libido is temporary, not permanent, and will pass.

Remind your partner that the loss of sex drive is perfectly normal for a breastfeeding mother, and is nothing to do with your feelings for them, but more to do with a 'tap' being turned down (or off!) to make way for something else.

If you don't want to have sex, don't, but in this case, try to make sure you find other ways to create intimacy in your relationship to keep it strong. Of course, a baby will take up a great deal of your time, so you both need to find little ways to take care of each other too because, before the baby, there was the two of you – and one day when he or she leaves home, it'll be back to just the two of you again. It's important to keep nurturing your relationship through all the ups and downs.

Some ideas you might like to suggest is to give each other a candlelight massage (with permission to fall asleep!), go out to dinner, hold hands, snuggle up and watch a movie together, take a bubble bath, or shower together – the sky is the limit. Get creative and be patient – your sex drive will return again.

If you or your partner are struggling with a lack of sex in your relationship, please see a sex therapist or counselor. The last thing you want is for this to create resent or other problems when you've just had a baby.

On the other hand, if you're keen or open to connecting with your partner on a sexual level, even though you can't feel that usual excitement, then it's always worth a go. You never know, you just might end up enjoying yourself!