

Sextalk.

answers to your questions about sex and relationships

factoid

Emergency contraception (the “morning after pill”) is 75% effective when taken within 96 hours (5 days) of unprotected intercourse.

Q. My girlfriend and I are sexually active, and have been for some time. Often times after sex she experiences a “burning” sensation on the skin surrounding her vagina. She says it is different from the internal burn of a bladder infection, but is still very uncomfortable. It lasts from 2 to 10 minutes, and it seems to only happen when she does not orgasm. She has had this problem ever since she began having sex 5 years ago, but has not been able to self-diagnose the problem. Is there anything she can do to reduce or eliminate this burn?

A. Painful burning after intercourse could be caused by many things: a yeast infection, imbalance in the normal bacteria in the vagina, sexually transmitted infection, lack of lubrication during intercourse (natural or artificial), and reaction to spermicides or latex condoms (although true latex allergy is rare). Here are some possible solutions:

Reduce friction & try other positions. Since the pain happens only when your girlfriend doesn't orgasm it is likely that friction from prolonged penetration or thrusting during intercourse is causing the irritation. It could be that the sexual positions you are using at the painful times are causing more irritation than other positions. If you haven't tried, let her be on top to control the angles and pressures of sexual contact and penetration.

More lubrication. Another possibility is that you are not waiting until she is fully stimulated and adequately well-lubed before intercourse. Dry intercourse can hurt. In general, women take longer than men to get excited in sexual situations. Allowing more time for foreplay (kissing, caressing, touching) may help her become optimally aroused. Applying water-based lubricants like K-Y liquid or Astroglide can greatly increase wetness and decrease friction.

Talk to a professional. Next time she has her annual pelvic exam, she should discuss her symptoms with a medical provider to rule out any conditions such as an infection. After reviewing her health history and doing a physical exam the provider may also have some suggestions. If your girlfriend is a student at the UA she can be seen at the Campus Health Service Women's Health Clinic. Call 621-9202.

Have a question? Send it to sextalk@email.arizona.edu

SexTalk is written by Lee Ann Hamilton, M.A., CHES & Melissa McGee, Ph.D., MPH, health educators at The University of Arizona Campus Health Service.

