

sex talk.

answers to your questions about sex and relationships

wildfact

FREE condoms, lube and sexy prizes on the UA Mall, Wednesday, April 27th from 10am- 1:30pm!

Q Do men really reach their sexual peak at 18 and women at 28?

A. That men and women have different “sexual peaks” with respect to age is an idea so widely held, few people question it. But what does this refer to anyway? Sex drive? Amount of sex? Quality? Alfred Kinsey, the renowned researcher, alluded to this phenomenon back in the 1950s during his groundbreaking work on sex. Kinsey noted that women in their 30s experienced more orgasms than women at other ages, perhaps due to more self-assurance, more self-knowledge, or an increased willingness to communicate their likes to their partners.

Somewhere along the way these underlying reasons were ignored and the “sexual peak” idea turned into more of a preordained fact of biology. As always, the truth is more nuanced. The reality is that how you feel has a lot to do with both your desire for sex and your ability to enjoy it, irrespective of age.

If sex drive, or libido, is your yard stick for what constitutes “the peak,” then look no further than men in their teens and early 20s. Sex drive is related to levels of testosterone in the body, a hormone that helps regulate healthy sexual function in both men and women in varying amounts. Testosterone levels decrease as we

age, but this decline is more gradual in women than men. Even in the short term, the amount of testosterone in the body fluctuates. For example, women typically produce more of the hormone just prior to ovulation, the most fertile time in their menstrual cycle.

Some have even suggested that the increase in female orgasms after age 30 plays a role in fertility, since muscle contractions during orgasm may lower the cervix, allowing greater exposure to sperm and aiding fertilization. If true, the likelihood of orgasm during this age range may help offset a corresponding decrease in fertility, compared to women in their 20s.

Scientists have puzzled over the connection between the age-related differences in libido between the sexes. Why did evolutionary forces select for younger “peaks” in males compared to females? What reproductive advantages resulted from staggered sex drives? Although fascinating, there are still more questions than answers as to the “why” of differing “sexual peaks.”



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