

spice it up

Trying to conceive can sometimes turn intimacy into a chore rather than a pleasure. But baby-making sex doesn't have to be boring. Here's how nine couples kept the spark in their sex lives even when ovulation determined the timing. *By Leslie Pepper*

Sex is supposed to be fun, right? Unfortunately, when it's for the purpose of procreation, the fun part often gets lost. "When sex becomes a means to an end, it can really put pressure on a relationship, says Laura Berman, Ph.D., director of the Berman Center, specializing in female sexual health, in Chicago, Illinois. "Making love often changes from an intimate and pleasurable experience to something full of pressure and inadequacy." And when conception isn't quick and couples need medical help to conceive, the effects on their sex life can linger long after conception. "Even after a couple has finished fertility treatments, sex can often still feel stilted and unsatisfying," Berman says.

So it becomes crucial for couples to keep the lines of communication open and find ways to keep sex hot and steamy, even when trying to conceive. Here's some advice from other couples on how they kept things boiling in the bedroom.

"The whole notion of sex for procreative purposes really killed the mood, for both me and my husband. Without fail, the moment the little ovulation test stick told me it was the right time of the month, the stress escalated, the pressure was on, and we would wind up in a fight. Ultimately, after trying for a while, I scheduled an ovulation-timed trip to the place we went right after we got married—Santa Ynez (where *Sideways* was filmed, in California wine country). I disregarded everything I was told about not drinking while trying to conceive and got nicely toasted; and we had the most fun we'd had in a long time. Less than three weeks later, my pregnancy test was positive."

—AJ, pregnant

"After trying to conceive for so long, I began to look at my husband as just a sperm provider, and I forgot the handsome, funny, charming guy I married. So one day I took some time to write down the moment I knew he was the man for me—the day I met him. I closed my eyes and pictured him standing there in his blue pinstriped suit, and tried to remember the smell of the pink and



“Another trick is to do it outside the bedroom—like in the living room or the kitchen. It goes a long way toward making it more fun and exciting.”

After a while I started to fudge the numbers so he didn't know I was fertile. Instead I made him think I was overcome with desire for no particular reason—just like in the old days before sex was supposed to have a goal. —Martha, 34, two children ages 7 and 5

yellow roses he was carrying. And I could literally feel how my face flushed when I took the flowers from him. So from then on, whenever I was ovulating, I re-read my journal and I was able to reconnect to those romantic feelings.”

—Kristen Magnacca, 42, mother of two children ages 7 and 2, and author of *Love and Infertility* and *Girlfriend to Girlfriend: A Fertility Companion*.

“Part of the problem for me is getting aroused. It just takes forever with foreplay and so on for me to be ‘ready,’ so I’ve found that if I get my motor running earlier in the day by myself—by masturbating—I’m much quicker to go full speed ahead when it’s time with my husband. Another key for me is the lingerie drawer. I have several sexy little nightgowns—some are actually so short they can’t truly be classified as nightgowns! I put one on and I

250 million
The approximate number of sperm released each time a man ejaculates.

really feel sexy. Plus my husband and I pretty much go without sex the rest of the month, so those five or six days around my fertile period are much more intense.”

— Beth Lee, mother of two children, ages 13 and 7,
and trying to conceive #3

Sometimes I'll run out of the bathroom stark naked and streak through the house, coaxing him to chase me. We really get to laughing at that point, which is a great stress reliever. —Aliza, 40, trying to conceive

“Recently I got a slanted yoga pillow. I originally got it to help keep my hips up after sex, but I've found it really helps make things exciting during sex. Also, we have a kind of code name for sex: we call it ‘dates.’ When I'm in the fertile period I'll remind my husband in the morning that we have a date that evening. Or during the week I'll tell him we have to have at least three dates that weekend. He loves that!”

— Kate, 38, trying to conceive

“When you're doing it every other day for a week at a time every month, sex tends to get very boring. After trying to conceive for a while, we decided to try some different positions.

And it's definitely helped me enjoy myself more, and helped my husband perform better. The other night, for instance, we did it in a chair with me sitting on his lap. That was really exciting for my husband because I was kind of dominating the situation. And fun for me because, well, I was dominating the situation! Another trick is to do it outside the bedroom—like in the living room or the kitchen. It goes a long way toward making it more fun and exciting.”

— Erin, 29, mother of a 4 year old, and trying to conceive #2

“When I was on Clomid we had to do it on a schedule, which took a lot of the romance out of it. So I took it to the extreme and made a joke of it. I'd tell my husband ‘Get on, get off, get out!’ Yes, as in, get on me, get your rocks off, then pull out slow—I needed to put my feet up so I wouldn't waste a drop. I'd even look at my wrist during sex sometimes, pretending to see the time and ask if he was done yet. Very romantic, I know, but it cracked my husband up.”

— Barbara, 39, mother of two daughters, ages 6 and 3

“A good friend of mine gave me a large scented candle and told me to light it whenever it was time to have baby-making sex. It was a much gentler way to let my husband know it was time without having to bluntly state, ‘Honey I need your sperm now!’”

— Catherine, mother of a 2-year-old adopted daughter *

50
to
100
The number
of those
250 million
sperm that
actually
reach the
fallopian
tubes after sex.