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### Pre- and post-sex rituals to practice

Sep 03, 2013 9:00 PM by Christine Bryant  
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While female hygiene is important to a woman's physical health, intimacy can be important to a woman's emotional health. Here are some pre- and post-sex rituals that will benefit both your mind and body.

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### Before and after making love

It's surprising how many people just do the deed without taking the time to truly enjoy each other or without taking the steps for good hygiene before and after sex. Here are some tips from experts who say both are important.

#### Before sex

##### Get "support"

Be prepared with your "support system," says Dr. Jane Greer, a marriage and family therapist. This includes contraceptives you use, such as birth control pills or gels.

"This enhances the ability to stay in the moment," she said. "Normally, you have to stop in the middle for someone to get up and get the condom or put in the diaphragm, which can dampen the mood and passion you have going."

Have proper lubrication handy, as well — it can help prevent urinary tract infections in women, according to the National Association for Continence. Talk to your doctor about which contraceptives are best for you, because using diaphragms and spermicidal jelly or foam may increase the risk of infection.

##### Work out

Yes, that's right — work out before sex. Including a short workout prior to sex can help you have a more pleasurable experience, says Michael Alvear, a relationship expert, columnist and host of HBO's *The Sex Inspectors*.

"Twenty minutes of cardio at 70 percent of your heart rate has been shown to raise hormone levels linked with arousal — estrogen, prolactin, testosterone and cortisol," he says.

For an added bonus, exercise with a partner.

"His sweat contains androstadienone, a compound lab researchers have discovered can elevate women's hormones and create physiological arousal," Alvear says.

##### Make time for foreplay

Foreplay can include a wide variety of acts — from massaging to kissing and even simply holding hands.

"Relaxing, reassuring salacious touch helps lovers to ease into sexual response, enabling them to ultimately get more revved up for sexual intimacy," author and relationship expert Dr. Yvonne Fulbright says. "This is why foreplay that involves cuddling, massaging, kissing etc. is so critical, especially if people have had a long, hard day."

#### After sex

##### Cuddle

Yes, it can be a dreaded word for men, but Greer says it's important to connect emotionally — and that can happen through conversation, kidding around or cuddling.

"It's more about your individual comforts," she says. "However, it is important that the romantic conversation and cuddling are your sexual connection, whether they occur at the start or the end of the act. What matters most is to include it somewhere along the way during your sexual activity."

##### Snack

Here's something you may not have thought of: Invest in a refrigerator for your bedroom for post-sex snacks.

"They cost as little as under \$100, and you can spend up to a thousand if you're flush on a fancy one with a wine-chilling compartment and other bells and whistles," says April Masini, author of the Ask April advice column. "Tuck it away in your bedroom or master bath and fill it with bubbly champagnes, mineral water and any other beverages he loves, as well as some good chocolates, some cheese and veggies, and other after-the-act snacks!"

##### Head to the restroom

Urinating before and after intercourse is a tactic that may help prevent recurrent urinary tract infections, according to the National Association for Continence. It may not be the most romantic act, but it can save you a painful infection if you are prone to UTIs.

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