

**INTIMACY, SEX
& RELATIONSHIP**

Read My Lips: There's No 'Right' Orgasm For Women



**DR. SANDRA
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SPECIAL TO THE COURANT

One of the questions I'm asked most often (from men and women alike) is how to "give" or "receive" an orgasm with only vaginal penetration.

Dear Dr. Scantling,
"My wife and I have been married for 22 years. She has no problem reaching orgasm when I touch her clitoris, but she never has an orgasm during intercourse. What percentage of women can reach orgasm with only intercourse? What's the best way to accomplish this?" I feel selfish when I ejaculate inside of her and she doesn't climax! Could you please help us? Thank you.

Lenny Meriden

Dear Dr. Scantling,

"I am a 34-year-old married woman with two kids, ages 3 and 5. Here's my question — I can only have an orgasm when I masturbate — but never during intercourse. Whenever we have intercourse it feels really good and I feel turned on, but I always need some "clitoral help" to have an orgasm. I enjoy sex but I can't convince my husband that he's a good lover. He feels like a failure because I don't climax in what he thinks is the 'normal' way. Please help."

Francesca, New Britain

It's really distressing to hear about Lenny and Francesca's suffering. Society's obsession with having the "right" kind of orgasm has ruined many perfectly good sexual relationships. I've said this before, but it bears repeating ... one kind of orgasm is not superior to another. It's not your responsibility to read your partner's mind or "convince" them that they're good lovers by your performance.

Since you're asking about statistics, the majority of women do not consistently have an orgasm during intercourse. Experts report approximately a third of women have an orgasm through vaginal penetration. Orgasm rates are highly variable and depend upon a number of factors — biological, psychological, and contextual.

To have confidence in these numbers we need to understand how orgasmic satisfaction is measured and if there is consistency from study to study. "Unassisted" penetration or "no hands" orgasms are a less frequent occurrence. Research samples are taken from a variety of sources — from "sex clinics" to nationwide magazine surveys — so use caution when comparing any particular study population to your own sexual relationship.

Female orgasm is complex. It is not parallel to male ejaculation. The inner portion of the vagina isn't especially sensitive to stimulation and for most women clitoral stimulation, breast touching, or "blended" orgasms are preferred to penetration alone. And if you're one of those women who get close to a climax and suddenly feel too sensitive to continue, you may be surprised to discover that you've already had an orgasm and didn't know it!

We do know some things about orgasmic women: Those who report the most satisfying climax know how to turn themselves on with fantasy, words, hands, lips, tongues, and more. They share their sexual preferences without embarrassment and know how to let go when their natural tendency might be to tense up.

These women experiment with positions that stimulate their favorite parts and aren't hesitant to share their personal toys with a lover. They have developed control over their PC (pubococcygeal) muscles (the ones that stop urine flow) and use their "talent" to heighten mutual pleasure. But most of all orgasmic women report feeling secure with their partners.

But even if you check all of the boxes above, there are no orgasmic guarantees. No one has mind-blowing sex every single time. Getting fixated on having a certain kind of orgasm is a sure prescription for disappointment.

Orgasms are mysterious. But one thing is for certain. If you're not having fun, you're definitely missing the point.

»» Dr. Sandra Scantling is a licensed clinical psychologist and certified sex therapist in Farmington. You can e-mail her at AskDrScantling@aol.com; her website is www.drscantling.com. This column is not intended as a substitute for professional, medical or psychological advice. Case material used here is not intended to represent any actual individuals.