



HEALTH TIPS

Research has shown that blueberries help increase cognitive function in humans



Skipping boosts a person's bone density, helping keep off osteoporosis. The Osteoporosis Society recommends two-five minutes every day

ASK THE SEXPERT

DR MAHINDER WATSA



1 I am a 37-year-old married man. My wife conceived two months ago. For the last 15 days I have not been able to ejaculate despite getting a proper erection during intercourse. Though, my wife is reaching orgasms. Is it a serious problem? Have I exhausted my semen? Please help.

No, the semen is there. Do you ejaculate with masturbation? It's possible that you are feeling guilty about the arrival of the new baby. Please consult a sexpert or a urologist.

2 I am 35 years old and have been married for two-and-a-half years. My partner and I have an active sex life. We use the withdrawal technique and have sex without protection. I get aroused easily and can hold my erection for a long time. But the moment I put on a condom, I lose erection. I go for regular walks and exercise at home. Also, I smoke and drink occasionally. We don't want to have children. Please help. Visit a gynaecologist and check for alternative options of contraception. If it suits her, she can safely adopt a low dose hormone pill till both of you wish to start a family.

3 I had sex with my partner twice — the first time was within five days after her periods, and the second was within 15 days. I am sure I did not ejaculate inside her. However, she has got a viral infection and has been asked to take ofloxacin and esomeprazole. Her periods are due on 12th of this month. Today she noticed dark blood flowing from her vagina which lasted about an hour. It wasn't her period. Also some liquid is oozing from her right breast when pressed. Is she pregnant? Unlikely, but guess work does not help. Probably it is the start of her period. Buy a urine pregnancy kit from a chemist and check for pregnancy. At times, the milk flow can occur without a pregnancy.

SEND YOUR QUERIES TO: Ask the Sexpert, Mumbai Mirror, Times Of India Building, Dr D N Road, Mumbai 400001 or email at drwatsa@timesgroup.com. Contact Dr Watsa, send an email to mcwatsa@hotmail.com

DEAD-END LOVE

Not everyone wants their relationship to end in marriage, but if you feel you are in love limbo, read the signs



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In January this year, 27-year-old American champion swimmer and Olympian Michael Phelps ended his one-year-long affair with aspiring model and girlfriend Megan Rossee because he reportedly felt the relationship "wasn't going anywhere" and split to "pursue other options".

Ending a dead-end relationship is smart move, couple counsellors will tell you, except, not everyone is as prudent or brave (or lucky?) as Phelps. It's not uncommon, say psychiatrists, to come across individuals who develop suicidal tendencies when they realise their expectations from a love are moons away from that of their partner. Jiah Khan would know.

Dating someone and not knowing if there is a "future," seems to be a fact most modern lovers are grappling with. The I'll-take-it-as-it-comes lot are happy being in limbo. It's those looking for direction who'd do good making a note of signs that indicate your relationship is going nowhere.

NO REFERENCE TO FUTURE

Discussing the future needn't freak partners out. It indicates a mutual interest in wanting to take things forward, and doing things together, assuming you haven't known each other for just a month. The attraction may be strong; there might even be respect and affection involved, but to see someone in the guise of a life partner takes something more.

"Being attracted and wanting to develop a committed relationship are two different things. It's possible that one of the partners may have no desire to focus on 'one person'," says New York-based relationship expert Susan Winter.

It's about the bigger picture, explains Mumbai-based couple counsellor Shreya Podaar, who holds a Masters in marriage and family therapy. "It lets you know if your partner sees you in their bigger picture of life, leaving you with a sense of belonging and assurance." In the absence of 'planning', Winter says, "it's not about you... it's about him/her. And this is not a reflection of your worth. It's reflective of someone who's

Olympian Michael Phelps ended his affair with model Megan Rossee this year, reportedly because the relationship "wasn't going anywhere". Counselors say, a similar decision by the late Indian actress Jiah Khan could have worked towards ending her dead-end relationship with Suraj Pancholi

still sampling the buffet table of life, and hasn't made up his/her mind."

Psychiatrist Dr Dayal Mirchandani, who has a private practice in Andheri, raises a valid red flag. "Making future plans depends on the age of the couple. At 21, it's difficult to expect someone to make up their mind. In your thirties, it's a valid concern," he says.

ONLY SEX OR NO SEX

Sex and passion's role in a successful relationship can hardly be denied. But it's about finding the balance. You don't just want to be "booty call" for your partner, Winter warns. In the utter absence of intimacy (although you may argue that the equation is high on affection, protectiveness and respect) on the other hand, you are no better off than mere friends. "For a healthy, long-term relationship, the mind must feel as stimulated as the body," says clinical psychologist Saloni Sawnani.

No reference to a shared future is reflective of someone who's still sampling the buffet table of life

SUSAN WINTER, RELATIONSHIP EXPERT



YOU BOTH ACT BOHEMIAN

If one or both of you act like you are single when in public, it's a sign. If you are not 'allowed' to let the world know you are dating, it's a decision that must be questioned. "If someone is reluctant to show his/her affection in public, it's not a bad idea to reassess your feelings and ask why are you with him/her," advises Winter. This should not be confused with giving the partner space and having an independent social life off and on. It's a problem if it's the norm rather than the exception. Then, where is the 'us' in the relationship? Dr Mirchandani says, usually, for the first six months after hooking up, couples are at their best behaviour. "Once you've given it time, interacting with your partner's friends and family helps you get to know your lover better."

YOU DON'T MAKE THE TIME

Not having enough time is an excuse. No professional priority can be big enough to repeatedly spring up as a hurdle in spending time together. "It's tough to take stock, review a relationship honestly," says Sawnani. Work pressure, then becomes the perfect foil. "Often, couples who don't want to confront their feelings or find out what's amiss, hide behind excuses," she says. Winter suggests you ask why you are willing to repeatedly make time for someone who's not making time for you. "When a man chooses to be in a partnership with a woman, he is aware of her value, and will make the effort. And so must women."

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