

Majority of women report sexual dysfunction after childbirth

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Many women notice that their sexual health changes after childbirth, according to researchers from Loyola University Chicago. Loyola researchers have a study under way to determine the extent to which pelvic pain may be related to this change.

"Many [women](#) experience physical changes after childbirth. This can lead to significant disability and impaired [sexual function](#)," said Sandi Tenfelde, PhD, RN, APN, study co-investigator, assistant professor and director of the Women's Health Nurse Practitioner (WHNP) Program, Loyola University Chicago Marcella Niehoff School of Nursing. "We plan to learn more about [pelvic pain](#) and its association to reduced sexual function to ultimately improve [sexual health](#) for women after childbirth."

As a woman's body changes during pregnancy and after the birth of a baby, her sexual function may change as well. The recovery to pre-pregnancy levels of sexual health after childbirth is gradual and varies by individual. Factors that can affect postpartum sexual health include body image and perineal pain related to trauma from childbirth. Despite the high number of women affected by pelvic pain after childbirth, the cause remains unknown. The relationship between postpartum pelvic pain and sexual function also has not been extensively studied.

Researchers are recruiting women for this study who are between the ages of 21 and 50 and who have delivered a baby in the past year. The study will help clinicians and researchers understand how pregnancy and

postpartum changes affect sexual health and quality of life.

Study participants will be seen at Loyola's Pelvic-Floor Clinic in Maywood. They will be recruited from across the Chicago area and from the Wellness Clinic for Mothers at the Loyola Center for Health at Burr Ridge. This was the first multidisciplinary program in the Chicago area to help women recover from pain, injuries and other pelvic-floor disorders related to pregnancy and [childbirth](#).

For more information or to enroll in the study, contact Dr. Sandi Tenfelde at (708) 216-9213.

Provided by Loyola University Health System

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