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# Sad in the Sack: Do You Have Post-Sex Depression?

**A surprising number of women say they feel sad and depressed even after "good" sex, new research shows. What's going on, and how can you steal back that sexual afterglow?**

By [Melissa Johnson](#)

**Friday, April 1, 2011** — It's not unusual to feel a little bummed after a less-than-toe-curling romp in the hay, but one-third of women said they've felt depressed even after satisfactory **sex**, according to a new Australian study in the *International Journal of Sexual Health*. The condition, officially called post-coital dysphoria, affects 10 percent of women regularly, the researchers found.

Could you be experiencing post-sex **depression**? Symptoms include feelings of sadness, anxiety, regret, restlessness, and irritability after a sexual encounter.

"There's no doubt that many men and women swear that they have these negative feelings after sex, and occasionally after **masturbation**," says Debby Herbenick, PhD, associate director of the Center for Sexual Health Promotion at Indiana University in Bloomington, Ind. Although the Australian study looked at college-age women, post-coital dysphoria isn't limited to coeds.

"It can affect older women and men too," says Michael Krychman, MD, a gynecologist and executive director of the Southern California Center for Sexual Health and Survivorship in Newport Beach, Calif. Dr. Krychman, who has treated patients of all ages with post-sex blues, describes the feeling as "buyer's remorse."

Some adults have mixed feelings about sex — from their upbringing, religion, or other influences — and may experience guilt or frustration after a sexual encounter. This may especially be a factor in people prone to sex-addictive behavior, says Krychman, "who can have a huge let-down after **orgasm**."

## What Causes Post-Coital Blues?

Researchers don't know for sure, but Krychman theorizes that hormonal shifts after orgasm — the same changes that sometimes trigger post-sex headaches — could be to blame.

It's also possible that sex is raising other issues in your relationship or life outside of the bedroom.

"If you feel unhappy right after having sex, try to figure out where those feelings are coming from," Dr. Herbenick advises. "Are you upset with your partner? Are you having self-esteem or body issues? Are you sad about other things in your life?"

Both experts agree it's important not to dismiss your feelings, and to address any somethin



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