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After sex how long to take pregnancy test

Whether you're actively trying to get pregnant or not, the time between unprotected sex and when you can take a pregnancy test feels like forever. But if you test too soon, you risk getting a false-negative result, meaning you're pregnant but the test shows you're not. The right time to take a pregnancy test after having unprotected sex is the first day after a missed period or 21 days after unprotected sex if you have irregular periods. This article will explain why it's important to wait and how to take a pregnancy test for accurate results. ArtistGNDphotography/Getty Images The best time to take a pregnancy test is the first day after a missed period or 21 days after unprotected sex. Some tests claim they can detect a pregnancy a few days before a missed period, but you may get inaccurate results. It takes just minutes after unprotected sex for the sperm to reach and fertilize the egg. Then, it will take several more days for the fertilized egg to travel to the uterus and implant itself in the uterine lining. It can take two to three weeks from when you have unprotected sex to when you are officially pregnant. Taking a pregnancy test less than five days after having unprotected sex is too soon. Pregnancy tests measure the amount of human chorionic gonadotropin (HCG) in urine, a hormone that doesn't begin production until the embryo implants itself into the uterus. Levels of HCG are lowest in early pregnancy and increase by 50% daily for the first ten weeks of pregnancy. An early test may not detect low HCG levels before a missed period, potentially producing a false negative result. If you know when your next period is due, wait until you are late to take a pregnancy test. Pregnancy is one of the potential causes of a missed period. Usually, it is the very first sign of pregnancy. The result of a pregnancy test is also more likely to be accurate when you take it after a missed period. Knowing when your next period is due can be trickier if you have irregular periods. If you're unsure when your next period will arrive, take a pregnancy test three weeks after you had unprotected sex. The pregnancy hormone, HCG, can be found in the urine and in the blood. At-home pregnancy tests use urine, while blood tests can only be taken at your healthcare provider's office or another medical center. At-home pregnancy tests are a solid option because they are easy to use, inexpensive, and convenient. You'll have your results in a matter of minutes. At-home pregnancy tests can be found at most drugstores, discount stores, online, and in the family planning sections at grocery stores. At-home pregnancy tests require peeing on a stick with a test strip inside it, or they may use a paper strip that you would dip into a clean cup containing your urine. You must follow the instructions exactly, no matter what brand or type of at-home pregnancy test you use. If the test has expired, get a new test. At-home pregnancy tests are 99% accurate when used correctly. Here are some tips to avoid false positives, which occur when the test reads positive but you're actually not pregnant: Make sure you take the test after you miss your period. If you don't know when your period is due, take the test 21 days after you have had unprotected sex. Take the test using your first pee of the day. Any HCG levels will be most concentrated at this time. If you need to take it later in the day, make sure it has been at least 3 hours since you last peed. Avoid drinking too much water before taking the test. This will dilute HCG, risking a false-positive result. There is no difference in accuracy between blood and urine tests for pregnancy if taken after a missed period. However, blood tests are more sensitive before a missed period and can detect HCG to confirm pregnancy at that time. Unless your healthcare provider tells you one is needed, a blood test is unnecessary to confirm a pregnancy. Assuming you have taken the pregnancy test after a missed period and followed instructions correctly, you are not pregnant if the results are negative. If your results are positive, it's safe to assume that you are pregnant. Make an appointment with a healthcare provider to confirm the pregnancy and get a physical examination. If this was a planned pregnancy, you may be happy but still overwhelmed with the news. An unplanned pregnancy will be more complicated. You can discuss next steps with your healthcare provider and a counselor. If you have had unprotected sex and you think you may be pregnant, you need to know as soon as possible. At-home pregnancy tests are inexpensive and can be found at most drug and grocery stores. The best time to take a pregnancy test is first thing in the morning, after a missed period. If you don't know when your period is due, you'll need to take the test three weeks after you had unprotected sex. Regardless of your results, discuss next steps with a healthcare provider. Updated: April 2024 You're worried. You had unprotected sex and the possibility that you may be pregnant consumes your thoughts. You want to take a pregnancy test immediately, but can you be sure the results will be 100 percent accurate? Maybe you should wait? If you're wondering if you're pregnant, you need an answer. Immediately. However, that's not necessarily possible if you want the most reliable results. How soon can you take a pregnancy test after sex? "Many women panic when they realize they've missed a birth control pill or they've missed a period," said Dr. Hardison. "We want you to know that we can help guide you through this process in a way that ensures you're getting the most accurate results." How Long After Sex Can You Have a Pregnancy Test? Timing is everything when it comes to getting accurate pregnancy test results. Use this simple flowchart to determine the best time to take a pregnancy test: You may be thinking, "Why should I wait when I want results now?" You may not realize that conception doesn't necessarily begin immediately after you've had sex. In fact, it can take up to 5 days for the sperm to fertilize your egg. Even after that, it takes several days for the egg to travel to your uterus, where it plants itself into the uterine lining. From the time you have sex until you are pregnant can take two to three weeks. That's why your home pregnancy tests won't be accurate if you take the test before your missed period. How Do I Know If My Home Pregnancy Test Is Accurate? First, if you test positive on a home pregnancy test, it's important that you schedule an appointment with us to confirm the pregnancy. From there, we can start prenatal care to help ensure you and your baby have the healthiest start possible. While most home pregnancy tests are fairly accurate, before using one, you need to ask yourself: Did I only just recently miss a period? Am I taking fertility drugs? If you answered "yes," these things could affect the outcome, and it's best to speak with us so we can help you determine your next steps to get reliable results. If you are pregnant, it's important to begin your prenatal care right away. Is It Possible for My Test to Be a False Negative? You can get a false-negative from a home pregnancy test. This means that you are pregnant but the test said that you're not. False-negatives can occur when: You take the test too early You check the test results too soon - it's important to follow the package directions carefully. You use diluted urine - it's best to use first morning urine because it's the most concentrated. If you get a negative result and your period still hasn't started, repeat the test. Even better, contact us for an appointment. Is It Possible for My Test to Be a False Positive? It's possible, but this is actually quite rare. If you have any concerns about the accuracy of your tests, we encourage you to schedule an appointment. Next, we'll take a closer look at the accuracy of these home pregnancy tests. How Accurate Are Home Pregnancy Tests? Perhaps you've seen one of the telltale "lines" on your home pregnancy test, but you're still a bit doubtful. After all, how accurate are home pregnancy tests anyway? Should you confirm the results with a doctor? And if so, when? "We understand that often, home pregnancy tests can present many questions as well as answers," said Dr. Hardison. "The most important aspect of any pregnancy test is to confirm the results with us so that, if you are pregnant, we can immediately begin your care, whether that be obstetric care or other supportive measures. We want to best address your needs right from the start." Actually, home pregnancy tests are pretty accurate. However, there are some caveats. Some aren't able to accurately diagnose pregnancy when you've only recently missed a period. This can result in a false negative. If your test tells you that you're not pregnant, but you have a feeling that you are, repeat the test a week later. Pregnancy tests may not be accurate if you're on fertility drugs or certain medications. If you're showing signs of pregnancy, you should schedule an appointment with us so we can confirm the results. Then we can outline your plan of care. When You Take a Home Pregnancy Test Makes a Big Difference The most accurate results—regardless of what the home pregnancy test claims—will be if you wait until the day after your first missed period. The reason behind this logic lies within how the fertilized egg produces hormones. When the fertilized egg implants into your uterine lining, the placenta begins to form. The placenta produces a hormone called human chorionic gonadotropin (HCG). This is what home pregnancy tests detect to determine if you're pregnant. HCG increases rapidly when you first get pregnant. In fact, it can double every two days. Therefore, if you take the pregnancy test too early, you may not get reliable results. If you have an irregular period, this can also affect when you will get the most accurate results. There are a few other things that can affect the results. For example, some women check the test results too soon - give the test enough time to process, typically four minutes. Make sure you follow all the instructions on the package. You should also take your test when your urine is most concentrated, which is typically the first thing in the morning. Why We Want to See You After Your Home Pregnancy Test First, we want to ensure that you are, in fact, pregnant, and you didn't receive a false positive from the test. Second, we want to start you on a course of care. This can include establishing your due date, determining when to get an ultrasound, reviewing medications, and addressing any questions or worries you may have. We'll also discuss what to expect during your next visits. For your convenience, we've compiled a complete guide to your appointments for you to help you be an active partner in your healthcare. In addition, we want to be sure you have access to the information you need. Not Sure If You're Pregnant? Let Us Provide the Quality Care You Deserve It can be confusing. We know that you want answers quickly, and it's often difficult to wait. When you're stressed, it's also easy to overlook something in the detailed instructions that come with home pregnancy tests. But we want to be sure you get the most accurate results possible. That's why our team of OBGYNs in Chapel Hill and Durham work with you as partners in your care to ensure you have reliable results you can count on. If you are pregnant, we recommend our Centering Pregnancy program that will provide more quality time with your provider and introduce you to a support system of others who have similar due dates to you so you can take this journey together. See Why Chapel Hill OBGYN Was Voted the Best in the Triangle We didn't go into medicine to seek awards. We just believe that you deserve the highest level of quality care. You deserve a health care team that will listen and help you live the healthiest life possible. That's the heart of our purpose. We're thrilled to be the recipient of multiple INDY "best of" awards. We were selected: Best Women's Health Practice in Durham County; Chapel Hill OB/GYN-Durham Southpoint Best Women's Practice Orange and Chatham counties-Chapel Hill OBGYN Best Women's Health Practitioner Durham County Melinda Everett, WHCNP Best Women's Health Practitioner in Orange and Chatham county-Melinda Everett, WHCNP Let us show you our award-winning, high-quality health care that combines the personal attention of a smaller practice with the state-of-the-art resources of larger university-based practices. Schedule an appointment today. The information in this article and the other articles on this website is for educational purposes only and is not intended as medical advice. If you have questions or concerns, please contact your healthcare provider. Whether you're actively trying to get pregnant or not, the time between unprotected sex and when you can take a pregnancy test feels like forever. But if you test too soon, you risk getting a false-negative result, meaning you're pregnant but the test shows you're not. The right time to take a pregnancy test after having unprotected sex is the first day after a missed period or 21 days after unprotected sex if you have irregular periods. This article will explain why it's important to wait and how to take a pregnancy test for accurate results. ArtistGNDphotography/Getty Images The best time to take a pregnancy test is the first day after a missed period or 21 days after unprotected sex. Some tests claim they can detect a pregnancy a few days before a missed period, but you may get inaccurate results. It takes just minutes after unprotected sex for the sperm to reach and fertilize the egg. Then, it will take several more days for the fertilized egg to travel to the uterus and implant itself in the uterine lining. It can take two to three weeks from when you have unprotected sex to when you are officially pregnant. 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