

Between the Sheets

Got a blush-worthy question? Bring it on!

Q My guy cheated on me, but I'm not ready to end things. Am I crazy?

A/ Not necessarily, says Tammy Nelson, Ph.D., author of *The New Monogamy: Redefining Your Relationship After Infidelity*. "I've met hundreds of couples who have made it work after an affair." First, know that the healing process will require honesty, communication, and patience from both of you. Though friends and family may encourage you to break up, she says you should resist the urge to engage in such a rash move right away. **"Try not to make any decisions until you've had a few months to grieve and get some perspective."**

In the meantime, Nelson recommends seeing a couples' counselor or possibly even attending a retreat to figure out if the relationship can be saved. If you're both committed, you might be surprised by the outcome. "I've heard many people say an affair was the best thing that ever happened, because they used it as an opportunity to create a stronger partnership," she says. "But if your partner shows no remorse, is compulsively unfaithful, or doesn't want to make an effort, it's probably time to end it."

Q Can you catch an STD from having a bikini wax?

A/ It's theoretically possible, especially if the salon isn't well maintained or the aestheticians are guilty of double-dipping (putting the spatula back into the wax after it has touched another client). For that reason, it's smart to choose a state-licensed practitioner at a facility that looks sanitary. But the risk definitely rises *after* your appointment, says Mary Gail Mercurio, M.D., professor of dermatology and obstetrics and gynecology at the University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry. **"Waxing creates tiny tears in your skin, which makes it easier for bacteria and viruses to enter the body."** So if you have sex soon after waxing with a partner who has an

STD, like herpes or HPV, you could be more apt to become infected. And because the process is irritating, it can even trigger an outbreak of herpes that's been dormant in your own body—so don't be too quick to blame your guy or the spa.

Mercurio's advice: Landscape as you like, but if you notice inflammation, apply hydrocortisone cream a few times over the next 48 hours to help that sensitive area recover.

Q Sometimes my boyfriend and I only have time for a quickie. How can I get in the mood faster?

A/ Plan ahead and let the anticipation build throughout the day, says Sadie Allison, a San Francisco-based sexologist and author of *Ride 'Em Cowgirl!*

20
Percent of 21- to 35-year-olds who admit to masturbating three or more times per day

SOURCE: MORNINGSIDERECOVERYCENTER.POLL

"Sending your guy a few salacious texts or pictures is a great way to set yourself on slow boil and get both of you revved up." Reading erotic short stories can also help put you in a sexy mindset; you can even check them out on your smartphone while waiting for the train, and no one will be the wiser. Or don provocative underwear, like a lace thong—just thinking

about what's under your clothes can get you in touch with your sensual side. **If you have a favorite fantasy, close your eyes for a few minutes and let your mind wander there.**

From a practical standpoint, you'll want to dress for easy access: Opt for loose skirts and skip anything with tights or complicated buttons, says Allison. If you're worried about not having time to freshen up before (and after) the action, keep a product like Fresh + Sexy Wipes by Playtex on hand. Because while spontaneity is great, sometimes it pays to be prepared.

Do you have a question you'd like us to address? Email it to youasked@shape.com and put "sex health" in the subject line.

