

## CHAPTER 22

### *Foreplay*

During the plateau phase, the rigidity of the male's erection increases, the head of his penis enlarges modestly, and his testes become enlarged and pulled up closer to the body. Preejaculatory fluid may appear. A sex flush occurs in about a quarter of males.

Meanwhile, in the female, vaginal lubrication continues, but may wax and wane. An orgasmic platform forms at the outer third of the vagina. The cervix and uterus elevate further. The inner two-thirds of the vagina lengthens and expands further. The clitoris slips under the clitoral hood, a fold of skin at the top of the labia. (This may lead a man to assume his partner isn't fully aroused and a woman to believe her clitoris is too small to be seen. Although the clitoris is small - about the size of a pea - it is very sensitive and this hood protects it so it can be stimulated without discomfort.) The lips of the vagina become more swollen and change colour. The sex flush intensifies and spreads more widely. There is a further increase in breast size and the areola enlarges.

In both sexes, heart rate and blood pressure increase further, breathing may become more shallow and rapid, there is a further increase in neuromuscular tension but visual and auditory acuity are diminished. Both males and females may use voluntary contraction of the rectal sphincter as a stimulative technique at this stage.

Though there are a few societies where kissing is completely unknown and others where it's considered disgusting and unsanitary, for most people, kissing is a major part of foreplay. Humans are not alone in this; most mammals, some fish, birds and lizards indulge in some form or 'kissing', licking, nuzzling, nibbling or biting. But if a kiss can be a great turn-on, it can also be a sure turn-off. Start with a kissable mouth; bad breath can quickly destroy desire. As with most touch sensations in sex, an initial teasing and titillation (gentle kissing, licking and sucking) is apt to be more stimulating than a direct assault. Varying the pace and degree of hardness will also enhance and maintain stimulation. As with all sex activities, force has little place in kissing. In particular, don't force your tongue into your partner's mouth; he or she will allow it to fall open naturally when ready for the French kiss - which should always be a light exploration rather than a ramming in.

One of Kinsey's truer observations was that 'there is no part of the human body that is not sufficiently sensitive to effect erotic arousal and even orgasm for at least some individuals in the population'. Actually, this is a slight exaggeration, since it is only skin and modified skin, with associated nerve endings, which respond erotically to touch. However, there are sexual hot spots (erogenous zones) which are particularly likely to evoke an erotic response if suitably stimulated. These may vary considerably from person to person and even in the same person from time to time, but common spots are the mouth, lips and tongue, the perineum, the earlobes and the thighs. Less common ones include the throat, the armpits, the anus, the navel, the abdomen and the toes.

Women are apt to require stimulation of these more general areas before they find more specifically genital areas stimulating but, under the right conditions, stimulation of the clitoris (with a very light, well-lubricated touch, with the woman in a comfortable position and guiding the man, and with no expectation of orgasm), the labia minora and the entrance to the vagina are definitely arousing. Then there are three areas within the vagina which some women find intensely stimulating. One is the G spot, a small mass of tissue on the front wall of the vagina, about one third of the way up. Another is the urethral canal, also in the front wall of the vagina, opening about an inch behind the clitoris and directly in front of the vaginal opening. Finally, stroking the area between the top of the G spot and the back of the vaginal barrel is reported to produce intense pleasure in some women and greater lubrication in most. Only about half of women find stimulation of breasts and nipples particularly erotic.

Men can respond equally as women to general stimulation but stimulation of their genitals is likely to be extremely arousing at any time. Their most sensitive spots (in descending

order) are likely to be the frenulum (the band running from the top of the glans to the top of the penile shaft; stroking up and down with varying pressure and speed can be extremely stimulating), the rim of the glans, the urethral meatus, the shaft of the penis, the raphe (the line along the centre of the scrotum; stimulated by gently running fingertips along it), the breasts and nipples.

Explore the geography of yourself and your lover and you'll probably find others.

Lovebites - actually a combination of light nibbling, sucking and licking - to the ears, neck, fingers and toes, nipples and genitals are arousing to at least fifty percent of people.

The most important factor in a woman's failure to reach orgasm is that her partner does not spend sufficient time in foreplay. How long is long enough depends on the woman and her partner but, for most women is about twenty minutes. If you want to shorten this (or even if you don't), it helps to prepare yourself and your lover mentally as far ahead as possible. Romantic details can help. Both sexes can profit by starting with kissing and caressing, varying the touch and the rhythms, and not going straight to the genitals. 'Playing hard to get' can sometimes work and sometimes be a total passion killer. If all else fails, he can give her an orgasm manually or orally; she is actually then more likely to have an orgasm during intercourse.