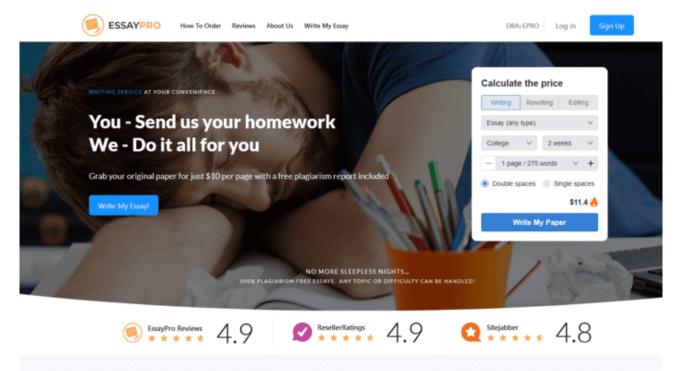
## Optimal Sexual and Reproductive Health and Happiness



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Like most wives, sometimes I drive my husband crazy. And even though he's a good sport about it, one of the most consistent ways in which I do so relates to one of my most pronounced idiosyncratic behaviors. For example, we will arrive appropriately early on a Saturday night at a theater to see a movie that will undoubtedly be sold out. And after picking the perfect seats, (one for him that gives him room to stretch out his long legs, and one that affords me the ability to have room to see around anyone who sits in from of me who will inevitably be much taller than I) and then I'll get up and move. What, you may be wondering, would cause me to behave this badly?

Well, it is really a matter self-protection. It's because of all the people who have been socially conditioned to interfere with nature and act upon the belief that they must be disinfected, deodorized and then re-fragranced. While this may be a headache for my husband, for me it could be a migraine. Many migraine sufferers report that strong smells can trigger a migraine (1); and in my case, perfumes are among the worst offenders.

Of course, people are not setting out to make life uncomfortable for those, like me, with

hypersensitivities to chemical odors. But discomfort or even <u>extreme</u> pain is often the consequence of people's over <u>utilization</u> of substances that remove their natural fragrances and their replacement of them with chemical substitutes. However, it is my contention that it may also be detrimental to the health and happiness of those who engage in such practices.

Americans, in particular, have been taught that human body odors and secretions are offensive. And consequently they wage a daily battle against those that their own bodies produce and hope that others will do the same. However, those dreaded smells and secretions play an important role in many human behaviors, most notably those related to sexuality and reproduction and the health of those systems.

But some of the time, much to my husband's relief, I actually can tolerate the chemically scented world in which we live better than at other times. The intensity of my sensitivities wax and wane in accordance with my menstrual cycle. This is because a woman's ability to smell varies over the course of her cycle and at the time of ovulation is believed to increase over 1,000 fold from that of the time of menstruation (2).

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