

The No. 1 Choice for Mothers!

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Magazine

Let's Get Physical

It's time to get up and get healthy!

Less Junk Food, Please

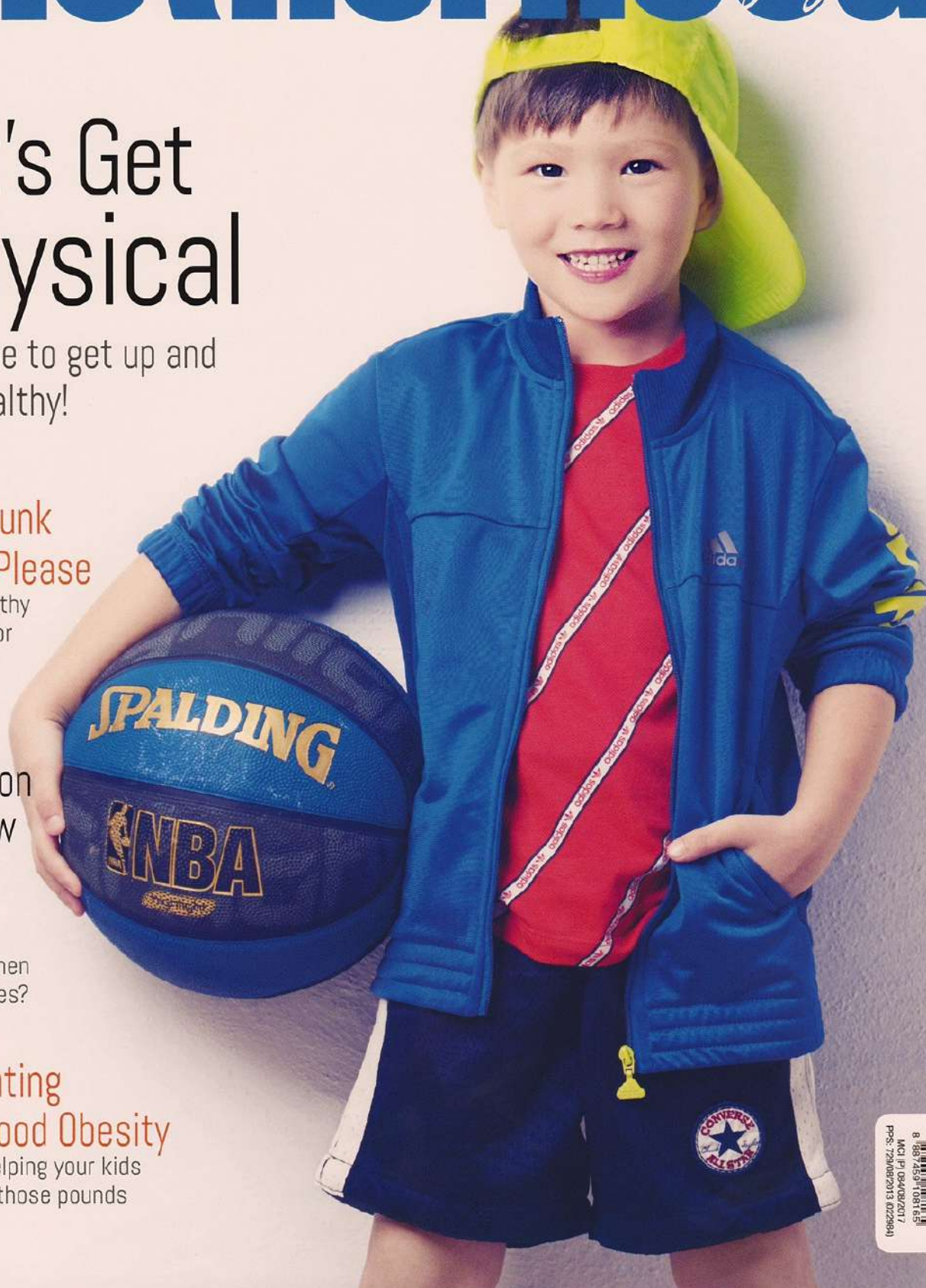
Make healthy food fun for your little ones!

Nutrition for New Mums

How does your diet change when baby arrives?

Preventing Childhood Obesity

Tips on helping your kids stave off those pounds



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Sex Drive after Baby

Has your sex drive been affected now that baby is here? You're not alone.

WORDS JOANNA ONG

Lost your libido after giving birth? Perhaps the thought of sex brings about dread and it seems like eons ago you've been in a lovey dovey mood. Not to worry, you're not alone. Lots of couples may have trouble easing back to bed (except for sleeping) once a baby enters the picture. Here's what our experts have to say.

Dr Christopher Ng, DBGYN at GynaeMD Women's & Rejuvenation Clinic at Camden Medical Centre says that normally most couples have a lower sex drive because they tend to be more preoccupied with looking after their newborn baby. Some of his patients cite that this makes them too tired to resume sex while others are afraid of pain as a result of the delivery process. However, it is also quite understandable that some couples may have strong desires for sex especially if they have been abstaining during the whole pregnancy period. Dr Lee Keen Whye, OBGYN at Gleneagles Hospital, Director of SOG Ltd also adds that the arrival of a new baby demands a lot of attention from the mother especially if she is fully breastfeeding. Coupled with the fact that babies may be demanding to feed every three to four hours round the clock, mothers can be exhausted from the lack of sleep, breastfeeding, housework and caring for other children.

Furthermore, Dr Lee mentions that during breastfeeding, hormones act to tighten the vagina and intercourse can be uncomfortably sensitive.

Ovulation is normally inhibited during breastfeeding and the natural desire for sex may be absent. Dr Ng adds that in theory breastfeeding reduces oestrogen levels which can reduce libido but there are many other confounding factors (as mentioned above) that may be the cause. For the fortunate others though, breastfeeding actually is a turn on and they report an increase in libido.

Safe for Sex

So, when will it be safe to resume sexual intercourse? Both doctors agree that it takes around four to six weeks for the episiotomy wound to heal and postnatal vaginal discharge to clear. It may take a little longer for the caesarean section wound to heal properly so it would be advisable for mothers to check with your OBGYN when is it safe to resume sex.

If you're wondering how fast can you get pregnant again, Dr Ng shares that fertility can return as soon as the following month after delivery provided mothers are not breastfeeding.

He recounts an experience he had with a patient exactly like this. One month after her normal vaginal delivery, she chose not to breastfeed as she wanted to get pregnant as soon as

possible. She became pregnant soon after and the interval between her two babies was 11 months apart (you cannot space it any shorter). While some mothers may be eager to get pregnant again, some may not. In any case, Dr Lee recommends mothers who had a C-section to consider trying for a baby again only after six months. Six months is also the duration encouraged for breastfeeding.

How to Regain Your Sex Drive

Dr Ng suggests that good communication with your husband is probably the best way to go so that both parties will have a better understanding of each other's needs and desires, which will help to enhance a loving relationship. He advises mothers to try to get enough rest in between looking after the baby so that you would be more "up to it" when you and your husband are together again. Try to have some couple-time together and enjoy some romantic moments that you both experienced during the pre-baby period. If the vagina is dry, try using adequate lubricant to ease any discomfort and to enhance your enjoyment. However, Dr Lee advises against using drugs and medications to increase sex drive, especially during the breastfeeding period. Practically, he assures that when you are done with breastfeeding, and leisure time resumes in a routine, sex drive will usually return especially when there is a strong desire to have another baby. □