

How a baby really affects your body

It's one of the most wonderful things that can happen to you, and it could change your body forever – for better or worse...

THE GOOD NEWS

★ Having children may protect you against ovarian cancer – and there may be more protection if you have two or more children, rather than just one. Having children is protective in much the same way as the Pill – while you're pregnant, your ovaries have a rest from producing eggs, which reduces the risk.

★ The more children a woman has, the lower her risk of breast cancer. Having children at a young age also lowers the risk. Research suggests that for every year spent breast-feeding, a woman's risk of the disease drops by 4.3 per cent. This is on top of the seven per cent reduction for every baby a woman gives birth to. If women in the UK breast-fed, on average, for an extra six months each, 1000 cases of breast cancer would be prevented each year.

★ Studies have found that the more kids a woman has, the greater her life expectancy. Apart from the reasons above, this may be due to extra support from children and grandchildren.

★ Breast-feeding may reduce your risk of getting the brittle-bone disease osteoporosis.



THE BAD NEWS

'I couldn't keep a tampon in afterwards'

Renee is all smiles again after having laser treatment



Giving birth to three children changed Renee Malloy's body in lots of ways...

When I found out I was expecting twins six years ago, my husband Tom and I were delighted. When the twins were born I had a normal vaginal delivery and they came out at about 7lb each.

But after having the twins, I noticed that I

was suffering from stress incontinence. I became disciplined about doing my pelvic-floor exercises and that seemed to help, but there was less sensation during sex.

Four years later, I gave birth to my third child. Even at 8½lb the baby practically slipped out and I realised that the muscles around

my vagina must be incredibly relaxed.

When I had my periods, I was so loose that I couldn't retain a tampon. The stress incontinence had got much worse – when I went to the gym it was so bad I felt I should be wearing a nappy.

Sex was awful – I could barely feel a thing, so I started avoiding it.

I found a surgeon called Dr Jacobson at the Laser Vaginal Rejuvenation Institute in the US, and had a

90-minute operation to tighten up vaginal muscles. It was sore for a while, but now I've got my life back.

■ Laser surgery to tighten the vaginal muscles costs from £6500, depending on the treatment required (inc return airfare to New York, transport to and from the airport, the cost of the procedure and five days in a local hotel). For more, visit www.lvrdoc.com or tel: 001 203 329 1200.