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ULTIMATE ABS DIET SECRETS

THE MEN'S HEALTH GUY

Josh Duhamel

*"I want to do good work. But
having a life is important, too."*

Josh wears an Agave T-shirt
and Faded jeans.

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Make her yours

When she's sizing up your potential as a suitable and genetically compatible mate, her attention will linger on your mouth. The University at Albany study showed that the appearance of a man's teeth helps determine his kissability. Women in the study were also more likely than men to factor in chemical cues—his breath, for example, and the taste of his mouth. Gallup argues that this is because kissing provides information about a person's health and hormonal status, because the sebaceous glands (which are densely concentrated on the face) are regulated by sex hormones.

LIP SERVICE Don't try to telegraph your genetic suitability right away. Instead, wait until the second or third date. "I love it when the tension builds up so much that it feels like we've been waiting ages for the kiss, and then we can't stop for hours," says Laura, 29, a brand manager in New York. "If you kiss on the first date, it's usually a boring peck and there's no tension behind it. The best ones are worth waiting for."

When it is go time, a little preparedness will pay off. Consider packing one of the new single-use micro-toothbrushes, such as the Colgate Wisp. It has a liquid-filled "breath bead" and doesn't require water to rinse (\$2.50 for a pack of four, colgate.com). Duck into the restroom after dinner to use it. Then take the initiative. "If a man is coming off as self-assured, this will make him appear more attractive at the moment of the kiss," says Kandi Walker, Ph.D., an interpersonal communication expert at the University of Louisville. Most important, start off easy. "Kiss lightly around her mouth, on her cheeks, or on her neck—that's a very sensual thing to do," says Andreea Demirjian, who interviewed 250 women and men for her book *Kissing: Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About One of Life's Sweetest Pleasures*. "Then when you reach her mouth, kiss her very softly on the lips—no insert-tongue-here kisses. Going slowly is sure to entice her."

Keep her happy—and enthusiastic

Once she's yours, going face-to-face on a regular basis is vital for the health of a long-term union. "The frequency of a couple's kissing has implications about issues like abandonment, divorce, and infidelity," Gallup says. "If you kiss her often, it telegraphs your commitment."

But according to the women surveyed, men aren't delivering the goods as often as they should. Gallup's study found that men use kissing primarily as a means to an end—to advance sexual relations. Yet women mainly use kissing as a way to

monitor the status of the relationship, and especially a partner's commitment level.

LIP SERVICE "Make an effort to kiss her even when sex isn't in the cards," suggests Gallup. "That way there's an affectionate and a sexual component to kissing." After sex, he says, is another key time: Women usually initiate post-romp kissing, the study showed. And in the long run, the more persistent you are with the kisses, the more sex you'll have. "Male saliva has trace amounts of testosterone—and testosterone is an aphrodisiac," Gallup says. "So passing saliva during open-mouth kissing over extended periods might help raise her testosterone levels and affect her sex drive."

Reduce her stress

Kissing can help melt tension away. When researchers from Lafayette College studied couples who either kissed, held hands, or talked for 15 minutes, they found that the kissers had the lowest blood levels of cortisol, a hormone that contributes to feelings of stress and anxiety. Additionally, there was a rise in oxytocin—the "cuddle drug" associated with attachment and the sense of calm and security we feel in relationships—in the men.

LIP SERVICE To make sure your partner harnesses the same positive effects from a makeout session as you do, jack up the romance. "The setting of a kiss can affect how women perceive it," says Walker. In fact, in the Lafayette College study, women's oxytocin levels decreased during kissing when the environment was clinical. When

the researchers switched to a more attractive environment, the women reported feeling greater intimacy with their partner.

Send problems packing

When things go awry in a relationship, kissing can be your cavalry. A study published in the *American Journal of Family Therapy* showed that kissing her on the lips can make resolving conflict easier. "It's much more powerful than we realize," says Gallup.

LIP SERVICE Punctuate your impassioned mea culpa with kisses elsewhere on her face, as well as on her hands, neck, and stomach. When Princeton University psychologist Michael Graziano, Ph.D., conducted

"I love when the tension builds up and it feels like we've been waiting ages for the kiss."

research on our defensive flinching and blocking mechanisms, these areas proved to be the most heavily defended parts of our bodies and the most erotic to kiss. A lot of mating behavior, he argues, is an exaggerated way to show the status of your defensive radar. "By allowing her partner's teeth near her throat, she is in effect communicating that she's turning her radar down, and that she's doing it intentionally for him," Graziano says. "That is a very encouraging message." He adds, "There's nothing more vulnerable and more erotic than kissing someone's eyelid—you have to really trust someone to let them kiss your eye." ■

Which makeout scenarios make you melt?

458 women tell us which kisses lead to more kissing, and which ones leave them cold

