

How does fertility affect women's desire for variety in products?

March 31 2015

Women seek a greater variety of products and services when they are ovulating, according to a new study in the *Journal of Consumer Research*.

"Fertile women seek more options in men and this drives their desire for alternative options as consumers. If you are open to checking out alternatives, you are simply more likely to find the best option and it turns out that the desire for alternatives in mate choice impacts other choice situations," write authors Kristina M. Durante and Ashley Rae Arsena (both University of Texas, San Antonio).

In one study, women reported how interested they were in men other than their current partner and were then asked to choose five candy bars from nine different brands. The study was conducted when they were ovulating and then repeated when they were not ovulating. The majority of participants chose a greater variety of candy bars when they were ovulating.

This change in desire for more variety is not conscious. When the women in the study were reminded about loyalty to one partner—by putting their wedding ring back on their finger—they were less likely to seek variety in products. This suggests that loyalty in romantic relationships can translate to [brand loyalty](#).

From candy bars and restaurants to lipstick and high heel shoes, women are more open to alternatives for one week a month. In order to find the

best mate, a woman needs to assess the attractiveness of alternatives and be open to switching partners, and this also leads to a greater openness to trying new products.

"For about a week every month, normally cycling [women](#)—constituting over a billion consumers—may be especially likely to respond to appeals by competing brands to switch. Female consumers might choose to try [new products](#) and experiences depending on when they make the decision. Ads that appeal to motivations to attract a desirable partner or remain loyal to a current partner are also likely to alter desire for variety and novelty in product choice," the authors conclude.

More information: Kristina M. Durante and Ashley Rae Arsenau. "Playing the Field: The Effect of Fertility on Women's Desire for Variety." *Journal of Consumer Research*: April 2015.

Provided by University of Chicago

Citation: How does fertility affect women's desire for variety in products? (2015, March 31) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2015-03-fertility-affect-women-desire-variety.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--