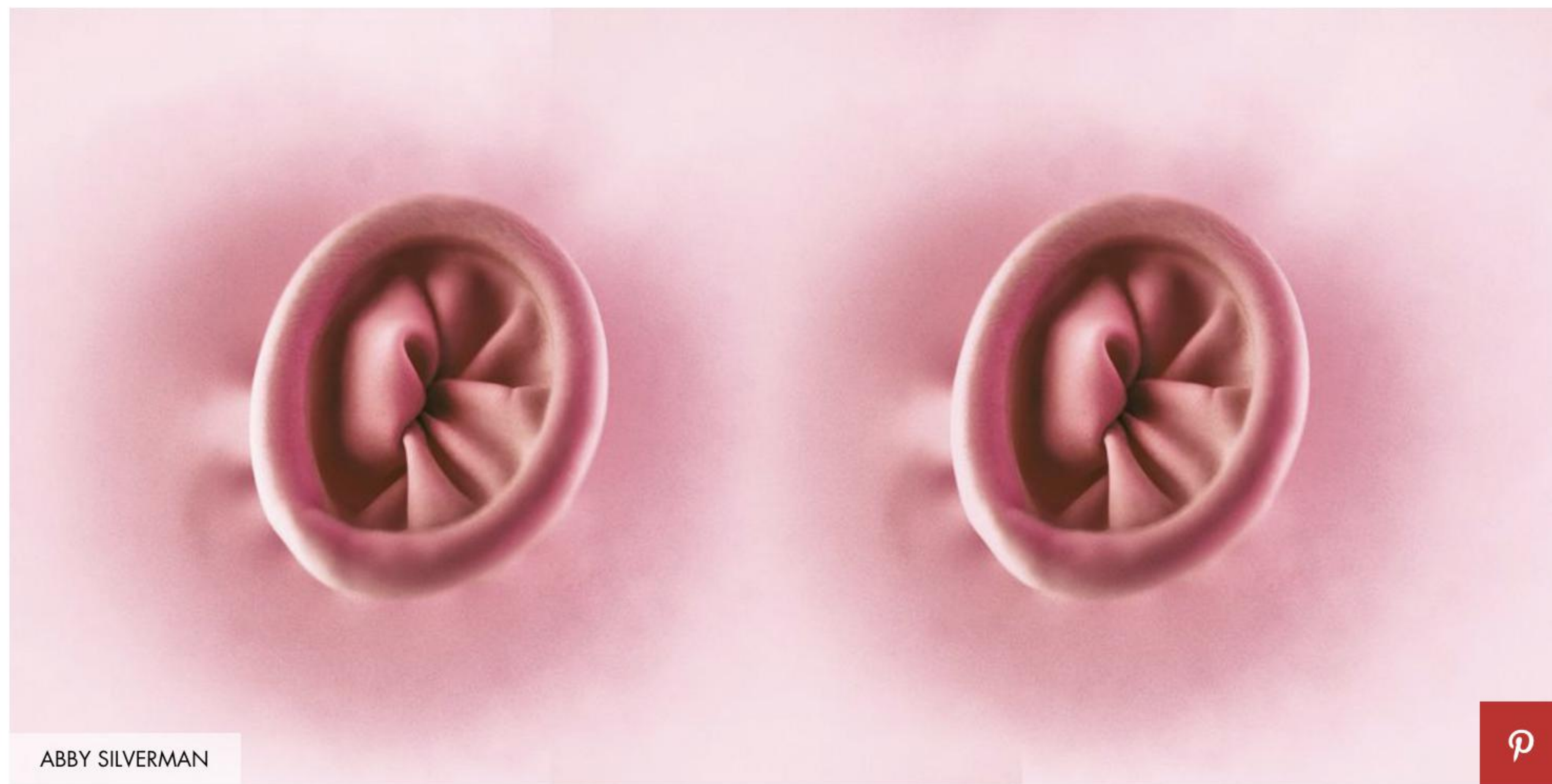
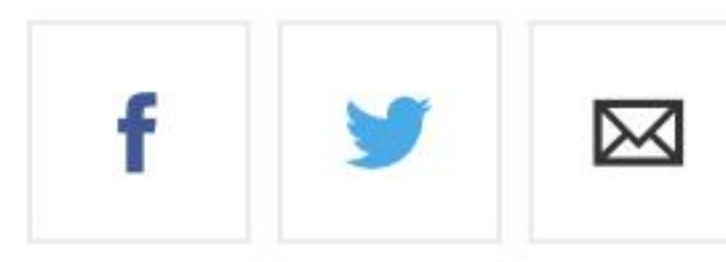


# There Are Two Nipple Shapes, and Spoiler: Both Are Normal

Gonna keep on screaming forever about how bodies are normal, no matter which way things stick out.



by HANNAH SMOTHERS SEP 28, 2018



ABBY SILVERMAN

The nipple may not be 100 percent free just yet, but we're certainly living in a time of [increased nipple visibility](#). Which is great! But one extremely unfortunate downer about all this nipple freedom is that its leading some people to be especially sensitive and scrutinizing of their own nips.

Are you ready to wear your nipples as accessories yet?

Hell yeah.

Hmm no, not for me.

There is endless variance in breast and appearance, and all of that variance is not only fine, but wonderful. It would be very boring if everyone had identical boobs. That said, feeling self-conscious, especially about body parts that are unfairly sexualized, is [exceedingly normal](#). Which is why you're about to learn about the **two nipple types**, and what's normal (spoiler: most things) versus what needs medical attention.

When most people think of as the "nipple" is actually the "nipple complex," says Dr. Rebecca Brightman, an ob-gyn in New York. That complex includes the areola, or the pigmented, soft skin that surrounds the actual nipple.

"Breasts come in all shapes and sizes—the same is very true about the nipple complex," Brightman says. "Some women are very darkly pigmented, some women have pale nipples." She adds that while women with larger breasts typically have larger nipple complexes, that isn't always the case. Basically, your areola could be the size of a dime or take up 50 percent of your boob real estate, and each thing would be equally normal.

The same is true for the shape of your nips. While most nipples you see on HBO, in movies, and probably also in porn are everted—or point out and protrude from the breast—that's not the only way a nip can look. As many as 10 to 20 percent of women have [inverted nipples](#), or nipples that are flat or point inward.

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Because of how commonly we see the everted type of nipples, a lot of people with inverted nipples feel [unnecessarily self-conscious](#) about them. Which isn't fair, because the shape of your nipples is largely genetic, and neither type is better than the other. Dr. Adam Kolker [previously told Cosmopolitan.com](#) that inverted nipples are usually caused by a thickened, short, or underdeveloped lactiferous duct, or the ducts inside the breast that connect your nipples to your mammary glands.

It's possible that people in inverted nipples may have a harder time breast feeding, Brightman says, only because a baby may have a harder time latching on to nipples that don't protrude as much. But she adds that a lot of people notice their nipples protruding more as they progress through a pregnancy, and especially as they begin producing milk. If your inverted nipples don't do this, your obstetrician or lactation consultant can teach you some latching tricks that'll help out.

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The only thing that should really concern you, regarding nipple type, is if you notice your usually everted nipples suddenly go flat or point inward. Brightman says this can be an early, rare sign of breast cancer. But otherwise, Brightman says it's normal and common to have one nipple that sticks out, another that points inward, or nipples that regularly switch from sticking out to pointing in. There's fluidity in nips.

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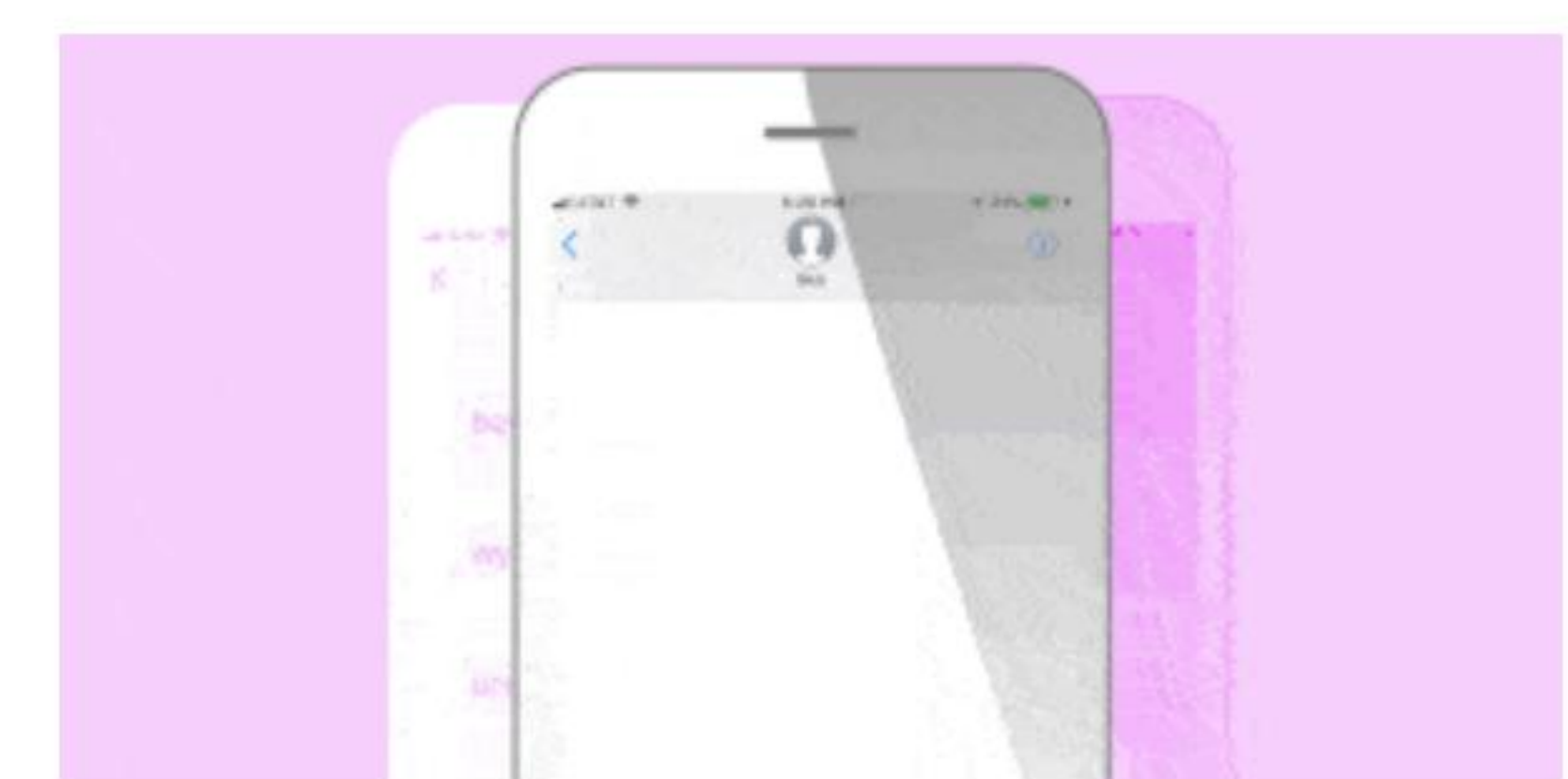


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