

# The monogamy molecule

Clip: Liz Bonnin goes to meet some affectionate tamarins. (Animals in Love, BBC One, 2015)

### LIZ BONNIN:

Family is hugely important to these little monkeys. In the wild, raising young is so demanding that, just like African wild dogs, the whole family has to pitch in. And tamarins have a very effective way of making sure they get the help they need...

And it's all down to some pretty clever tactics on the dominant female's part. When Maria is ready to get pregnant, she'll scent mark more than anyone else. And that's because hormones in her urine can temporarily stop the other females in the group from getting pregnant.

This ensures that there are plenty of helpers when her babies are born.

But it's not all about the little ones. Tamarin couples are extremely close and once again, this is very much related to hormones.

Carlos and Maria spend a lot of time grooming and cuddling and that's the secret of their strong relationship. Scientists have discovered that tamarin pairs who show a lot of affection towards each other have higher levels of oxytocin, also known as the love hormone. It's the same hormone that helps human couples to bond and it's found in many other mammals.

## MUSIC:

Darling I can't get enough of your love, babe ...

## LIZ BONNIN:

Oxytocin is nature's way of helping us to stay together, reinforcing the connection we have with our partner.

## MUSIC:

Darling I can't get enough of your love, babe ...