

FERTILITY AWARENESS

METHOD

The main purpose of the Fertility Awareness Method (FAM) is to confirm ovulation and determine the relative fertility window where pregnancy is most likely. If you are currently on the pill, you will unfortunately not be able to use this, as you do not ovulate, but give it a try when you go off it when you're ready.

BASAL BODY TEMPERATURE

A thermostat can be used to measure your basal body temperature (BBT) to confirm ovulation.

How: Use a digital thermometer to measure your temperature orally or under your armpit first thing in the morning. Do this before you get out of bed and eat or drink anything.

Why: Your body temperature is around 36 -36.5°C before ovulation, and rises about 0.2°C or more after ovulation due to progesterone's heating effect in the body. Some people may experience a slight drop in temperature just before ovulation which may be helpful to become or prevent pregnancy.

*Note that temperatures may be influenced by consuming alcohol or illness.

Tips:

- Use a digital thermostat that can measure two decimal places (36.52°C).
- Try and measure your temperature the same time each day.
- For the most accurate readings, allow the thermostat to be under your arm / tongue for at least 5 minutes.
- Decide if you measure your temperature from under your tongue, armpit or vagina, and be consistent.

*I am not a FAM practitioner. So please consult a FAM practitioner before using this method to prevent pregnancy.

CERVICAL MUCUS

Cervical mucus is vital for the survival of sperm to allow fertilisation. When you are healthy you produce fertile mucus for about five days before ovulation. This is your fertile window, and during this time sperm will be able to survive until ovulation. This is the time when pregnancy is possible or the time to focus on prevention.

When you are trying to conceive or not both non-peak mucus and peak mucus should be considered fertile, because both keeps sperm alive for 5 days.

Peak day is not when you have the most mucus, it's the last day of your cycle that you observe any peak mucus. Peak day highly correlates to ovulation. After ovulation your progesterone production increases and causes your mucus to dry up. You can expect your period 12-14 days after ovulation and these are considered your dry days. This shift from wet days (starting with non-peak mucus), then peak mucus to dry days can be used to confirm ovulation.

CERVICAL POSITION

The position of your cervix is a secondary fertility sign to assist in confirming ovulation.

How: Insert your middle finger into your vagina, through your cervix and feel what it feels like. Do this while showering and even squat if it makes it easier.

Why: The main shift of your cervix will be from high, soft, and open, facing down before ovulation to firm and closed and tilted backwards after ovulation.

Resource: Hendrikson-Jack, L. 2019. The fifth vital sign