

Fertility Awareness: Understanding Natural Family Planning



Highlights

Fertility awareness (also known as natural family planning) helps identify the days during your menstrual cycle that you are most fertile and can get pregnant.

Fertility awareness can be used as a method to avoid pregnancy (contraception), or to try and conceive.

There are different ways to practice fertility awareness, including the symptothermal method, ovulation method, calendar method, cervical mucus or Billings method.

Fertility awareness is not recommended if you recently stopped hormonal birth control, have irregular periods or are nearing menopause.

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Fertility Awareness Overview

Suitability of Fertility Awareness

You have recently stopped using hormonal contraception, as your cycle may take time to normalize and show clear patterns.

You have irregular menstrual cycles, making it more difficult to predict ovulation with accuracy.

You are approaching menopause, as hormonal fluctuations can make it harder to track fertility signs.

Your partner is not supportive of using fertility awareness as a method of contraception or conception.

Advantages of Fertility Awareness as Contraception

Natural and Free

Increased Knowledge of Your Body

No Cost

Reliability with Correct Use

Cultural or Religious Compatibility

Disadvantages of Fertility Awareness as Contraception

No Protection Against STIs

Increased Risk of Pregnancy

Learning Curve

Regular Monitoring

Periods of Abstinence

Types of Fertility Awareness Methods

Cervical Mucus Method

Post-menstruation: During the early part of the cycle, cervical mucus is typically dry or sticky.

Pre-ovulation: As ovulation approaches, cervical mucus becomes clear, stretchy, and resembles raw egg whites.

Post-ovulation: After ovulation, the mucus becomes thicker and cloudier again.

Temperature Method

Symptothermal Method

Calendar or Rhythm Method

Tools and Assistance

Mobile Apps for Fertility Tracking

Thermometers for Basal Body Temperature (BBT)

Ovulation Prediction Kits (OPKs)

Fertility Charts

Support from Healthcare Providers