

Achieving conception

The achievement of pregnancy involves special requirements and events:

The reproductive hormones (oestrogen and progesterone) must be at the correct levels for normal ovulation.

- Healthy sperm cells must be present.
- The woman's cervix must produce mucus to ensure selection, nourishment and transport of the best sperm cells to meet the egg in the fallopian tube.
- The fallopian tube must be unobstructed in order to allow the meeting of a sperm and ovum (conception) and allow the resulting embryo to pass into the uterus and implant.
- The uterine lining (endometrium) must be healthy and ready to receive the embryo.

Intercourse when the woman recognises the fertile characteristics of the mucus provides the maximum chance of conception.

Emotions affect the finely balanced functions of reproduction. In some cases the loving bond between the couple needs more nurturing before conception will occur.

It is essential that the couple have correct information about the requirements for conception. The Billings Ovulation Method can give this knowledge and may assist in identifying an infertility problem which may be amenable to correction. When this is treated by appropriate specialist management the couple can then use the knowledge of fertility recognition to provide the best chance for conception.

The Natural Family Planning Association

Provides instruction in the Billings Ovulation Method at no charge.

For clinic locations and directions throughout the greater Toronto area (and throughout Ontario) contact our Toronto office at (416) 481 - 5465 or our website:

www.toronto.naturalfamilyplanning.ca



The Natural Family Planning Association is an agency within Catholic charities and is supported by:

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The Natural Family Planning Association teaches the authentic Billings Ovulation Method and is affiliated with:



billings

OVULATION METHOD

ACHIEVING YOUR PREGNANCY NATURALLY



Capacity to conceive

Fertility reaches its peak at about the age of 24 in both men and women. In women, the ability to conceive declines between 30 and 40, then rapidly as the menopause approaches. In men, fertility gradually diminishes from about the age of 50, although a man has the potential for fatherhood into old age.

Of those couples trying to conceive, fewer than a third will succeed within the first month, only 50% by 6 months and 80-90% by 18 months.

Infertility is usually defined as the inability to conceive after 12-18 months of sexual intercourse without contraception. Approximately 15% of couples trying to have a child are unable to do so.

Recognising fertility

The joint fertility of the couple is dependent on sperm, ovulation and the presence of mucus. Mucus which produces a wet/slippery sensation at the vulva is an indicator of impending ovulation.

Most women can easily learn to recognise an obvious mucus discharge at the time of fertility. For some women this discharge may be slight in amount and not easily seen. However there will be a subtle change in sensation produced by the mucus at the time of fertility. No internal investigations are necessary.

The Billings Ovulation Method helps women to recognise this time of fertility and maximise the chance of conception.

Billings Ovulation Method

When a woman learns the Billings Ovulation Method, she is taught to recognise and understand her signs of fertility and infertility. She does this by observing the presence or absence of mucus at the vulva. This mucus, produced at the cervix, is essential for fertility. Sperm cells depend on this mucus for their survival and their ability to reach and fertilise the egg.

Mucus that has fertile characteristics indicates the approach of ovulation. Some women experience very little mucus and not in every cycle.

A couple having difficulty in conceiving can be assisted by a Billings Ovulation Method teacher. The teacher can assist the couple to understand the subtle changes in the mucus secretion or sensation, alerting them to the most fertile time in the cycle.



If there are no psychological or medical conditions preventing pregnancy, advice about timing of intercourse to coincide with this mucus provides the greatest success.

The Ovarian Hormone Meter monitors the hormonal ovulatory pattern and has proved useful for those women who have only a slight mucus symptom. Access to the Ovarian Hormone Meter is available through Billings Ovulation Method Centres.

Some causes of infertility

PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS can contribute to apparent infertility in both men and women:

- Fatigue
- Undue stress from overwork
- Emotional distress
- Stress due to infertility investigations
- Communication breakdown between partners

PHYSICAL FACTORS

In women sub-fertility or infertility may be caused by:

- Tubal abnormalities
- Ovarian disorders
- Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (P.I.D.)
- Douches, vaginal creams
- Cervical damage
- Endometriosis
- Oral contraceptive use (The Pill)
- Hormonal deficiencies
- Smoking

Some known causes of male infertility include:

- Genetic factors
- Birth abnormalities
- Obstruction of the vas
- Infections (e.g. mumps after puberty)
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Chronic ill-health
- Smoking
- Abnormality of the blood vessels of the testes

Acute feverish illness, prolonged stress and very frequent intercourse can also lower the sperm count temporarily. A low sperm count does not necessarily indicate male infertility. A Huhners Test (examination of sperm motility in the mucus after intercourse) is more informative.