



Fertility Awareness Based Methods for avoiding pregnancy

A Decision-Making Tool

Fertility awareness is the practice of tracking signs, or “biomarkers,” of fertility during a woman’s reproductive cycles. A woman can use her understanding of her fertile signs to:

- monitor her health and plan for menstruation
- help identify and manage medical problems
- try to become pregnant
- try to avoid pregnancy

Women are capable of becoming pregnant only when intercourse occurs during certain days each cycle. These days are called the “fertile window.” When the fertile window can be identified, intercourse can be timed either during the window to try to become pregnant, or outside the window to try to avoid pregnancy.

Biomarkers that are commonly tracked for these purposes include:

- cervical mucus
- cervical position
- basal body temperature
- urinary hormone levels
- menstrual bleeding

Trying to Avoid Pregnancy

In the United States, among reproductive-age women who are not using any method of birth control, 85% become pregnant during the first year when sexually active. This percentage can be lowered when people use contraception or Fertility Awareness-Based Methods (FABMs) to avoid pregnancy. However, no method reduces this percentage to zero except total abstinence.

FABMs help with avoiding pregnancy by identifying a woman’s fertile days so intercourse can be avoided on those days. The benefits of using FABMs include that they:

- are natural/not disruptive to the body
- require no pill taking, injections, insertions, barriers, or surgeries
- produce no side effects
- are compatible with teachings of major world religions
- promote learning and self-care
- can be used to help become pregnant if pregnancy goals change

This Decision-Making Tool highlights seven FABMs available in the U.S. that are supported by available medical research.*

**Medical research is classified as “high,” “moderate,” or “low,” depending on various factors. The medical research that supports effectiveness claims for the seven FABMs in this Decision-Making Tool was determined in a comprehensive systematic review to be of moderate quality. There were no methods determined to be supported by high-quality studies, and this tool excludes methods determined to be supported only by low-quality studies. www.replyobgyn.com/landmark-fabm-study/*

I’m Interested. What are my next steps?

Reply recommends learning Fertility Awareness from a certified fertility educator. Currently, Reply teaches three of the methods outlined in this tool - Sensiplan, Marquette and Billings, and offers support for women and couples using any FABM. Our educators are available both for in-person or telehealth appointments. Contact us at **919.230.2100** to learn more.

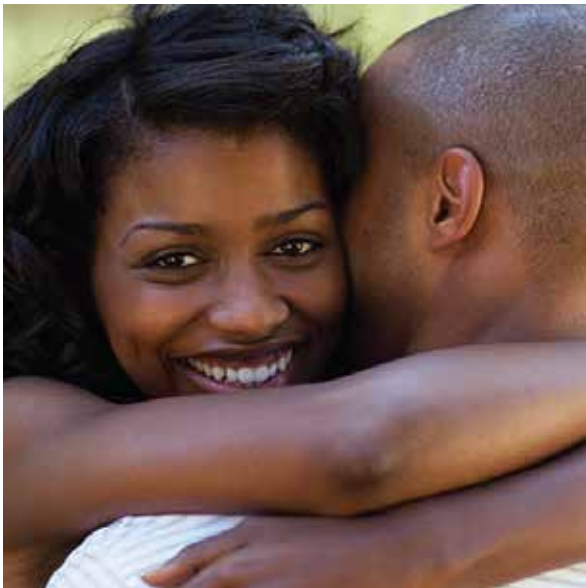
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Which method for preventing pregnancy is right for me?








Help me decide...	Sensiplan	Marquette	Billings	Two-Day	Standard Days	Natural Cycles	LAM
I prefer in-person learning	●	●	●	●	●		●
I prefer online or self-taught education		●	●	●	●	●	●
I have irregular or long cycles^	●	●	●	●		●	
I have an irregular sleep schedule	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
I prefer to observe/track only one biomarker			●	●	●	●	●
I prefer to use an online charting tool		●	●	●	●	●	
I have limited time to learn				●	●	●	●
I am breastfeeding without cycles^	●	●	●				●
Meets USCCB standards for Catholic diocesan NFP		●	●				

^Circumstances such as cycles lasting >40 days or breastfeeding without cycles may make use of some or all methods more challenging; please discuss with your medical provider.



Which method for preventing pregnancy is right for me?

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METHOD ^[1]		Pregnancy % ^[2]	How it Works	Advantages(+)/Disadvantages(-)	Additional Information ^[3]
Cross Check	<div>Sensiplan™ (sympto-thermal)</div> 	Typical Use 2-3% Perfect Use <1%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Cervical mucus is cross-checked with basal body (waking) temperature to identify fertile and infertile days during each cycle.Option to check cervical position instead of cervical mucus.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">In-person certified instruction available at Reply Ob/Gyn & FertilityTele-learning availableCan also be used for health monitoring and managementRequires Celsius temperature taking at same time every morningPotential for long fertile window = possible extra days of abstinence	<div>replyobgyn.com/sensiplan</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Learning Time: 4-6 hours over 4 sessionsPricing and/or contacts available at above linkInstruction may be billable through insurance at Reply <div>Sensiplan is a trademark of MW Malteser Werke GmbH.</div>
	<div>Marquette Model</div> 	Typical Use 6-7% Perfect Use <1.5% <i>For all variations of the Marquette Method See "Additional Information" in column at right</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Cervical mucus is cross-checked with urinary hormone levels, using the ClearBlue fertility monitor, to identify fertile and infertile days during each cycle.Option to check <i>only</i> urinary hormone monitor or <i>only</i> mucus.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">In-person certified instruction available at Reply Ob/Gyn & FertilityTele-learning availableOnline learning availableCan also be used for health monitoring and managementMay not work for all women; some women's urinary hormones cannot be accurately detected by the monitorPotential for long fertile window = possible extra days of abstinenceOngoing cost for test strips	<div>replyobgyn.com/marquette or nfp.marquette.edu</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Learning Time: 30 minutes to 3 hoursPricing and/or contacts available at above linksInstruction may be billable through insurance at Reply. <div>Pregnancy % breakdown for variations in Marquette Model: Mucus only - Typical 4-19% Perfect 3% Monitor only - Typical 2-7% Perfect <1%</div>
Cervical Mucus	<div>The Billings Ovulation Method®</div> 	Typical Use 3-34% Perfect Use 1-3%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Cervical mucus sensation and appearance are tracked to identify fertile and infertile days during each cycle.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">In-person certified instruction available at Reply Ob/Gyn & FertilityTele-learning availableOnline learning availableOnline tracking availableAvailable in SpanishRequires tracking of only cervical mucus sensationCan also be used for health monitoring and managementCan be used by reading/visually impairedAbstinence is recommended during first month of use	<div>replyobgyn.com/billings or boma-usa.org</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Learning Time for Billings Online: 3 to 4 hoursLearning Time for Billings In-person: Approx. 3 to 5 sessionsPricing and/or contacts available at above linksInstruction may be billable through insurance at Reply. <div>Preovulation intercourse is recommended only at the end of the day; every other day on non-fertile days. "Billings Ovulation Method" is a trademark of Woomb International Limited.</div>
Cervical Mucus	<div>Two-Day Method</div> 	Typical Use 14% Perfect Use 4-6%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Cervical secretions are monitored daily.Days are identified as fertile when secretions are observed on that day or the day before (a "2-day" check).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Method is self-taught onlineRequires only mental tracking of cervical mucusCan be started at any point in the cycleFree 2-Day App available (on iPhone only)Excessive days of cervical secretions each cycle may pose a challenge for correctly applying the methodCannot be used for health monitoring and management	<div>twodaymethod.com</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Learning Time: <60 minutesPricing: App is free <div>"TwoDay Method" is a registered trademark of Georgetown University.</div>
Other	<div>Standard Days (Cycle Beads)</div> 	Typical Use 11-14% Perfect Use 4-6%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">For use only for women with 26-32 day cycles.Identifies a 12-day fixed fertile window on days 8-19 for all cycles.Uses calendar, cycle beads, or free app to track cycles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Method is self-taught onlineNo requirement to track cervical mucus, temperature, or urinary hormone levelsOnly works with regular cycles (26-32 days)Women who are postpartum, breastfeeding, or transitioning from hormonal birth control cannot use method for first 3 monthsCannot be used for health monitoring and management	<div>cyclebeads.com</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Learning Time: 30 minutesPricing available at above link <div>"Standard Days Method" and "CycleBeads" are registered trademarks of Georgetown University.</div>
Other	<div>Natural Cycles</div> 	Typical Use 10% Perfect Use 1.8%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Designed for women ages 18 and up.User profile is developed based on entry of cycle history data, basal body temperatures, and optional luteinizing hormone tests; computer algorithm predicts day-by-day chance of pregnancy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Method is self-taught onlineEither Celsius or Fahrenheit thermometers may be usedAlso available in German, Portuguese, Spanish and SwedishThere may be prolonged number of fertile days in the first few cycles while computer algorithm learns user patterns, especially if breastfeeding or postpartum	<div>naturalcycles.com</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Learning Time: <60 minutesPricing available at above link; App only <div>"Natural Cycles" is a trademark of Natural Cycles Nordic AB.</div>
Other	<div>LAM (Lactational Amenorrhea Method)</div> 	Typical Use 2% Perfect Use <1% <i>See "Additional Information" in column at right</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Breastfeeding depresses ovarian function.For use only for mothers whose newborns are younger than six months old, <i>and</i> whose menstrual bleeding has not resumed, <i>and</i> who are exclusively breastfeeding on-demand both day and night (exclusive breastfeeding means >95% of feeds come from the breast).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">In-person instruction from an experienced educator available at Reply Ob/Gyn & FertilityTele-learning availableCan be used immediately after childbirthNo need to observe signs of fertility other than when menstrual bleeding resumesTemporary; LAM can be used only if all criteria are metMilk expression (by hand or pump) may interfere with effectivenessCannot be used for health monitoring and management	<div>waba.org.my/resources/lam</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Learning Time: <60 minutesPricing: Information is free at above link, however guidance from your doctor or an experienced educator is recommendedInstruction may be billable through insurance at Reply <div>Feedings spaced more than 4 hours apart during the day or more than 6 hours apart at night may reduce the effectiveness</div>

[1] Other symptothermal methods (including Couple-to-Couple, Justisse, and SymptoPro) base their effectiveness rates on Sensiplan data; however those rates have not been specifically tested and published. The Creighton Model FertilityCare System is a modification/standardization of the Billings Ovulation Method; reliable effectiveness rates have not yet been published. The Dynamic Optimal Timing (DOT) app is a modification of the Standard Days Method for use by women with longer cycles. DOT's effectiveness rates have not been specifically tested and published.
[2] The pregnancy percent indicates the percentage of women out of 100 using the method who became pregnant in the first year of use (or 6 months of use for LAM). For example, 2% means that 2 women out of 100 became pregnant, and 98 women did not become pregnant in one year. These estimates were determined by specific populations and may not be applicable to every woman. In addition, some couples combine FABMs with barrier methods such as condoms on their fertile days; currently, there is no evidence to suggest that FABMs are more or less effective when used in this way.
[3] Learning time and pricing may vary for some methods based on user's location and individual situation.

Special thanks to the Fertility Appreciation Collaborative to Teach the Science ("FACTS") for their important contribution to the early stages of this tool. www.FACTSaboutFertility.org