

Ovulation Tracking

What is ovulation?

Ovulation occurs when an egg is released from the ovary. This marks the fertile time of your menstrual cycle. The egg can live for 12-24 hours after being released from the ovary. Normally, only one egg is released at a time, but in some cases two or more eggs can be released, often with the use of infertility medications. Ovulation can be affected by stress, illness, and disruption of normal hormonal status.

How does ovulation affect getting pregnant?

It is important to know when you are ovulating in order to know when to have intercourse to get pregnant. Sperm cells can live for three to five days after intercourse to attempt to fertilize an egg. In normally fertile couples, there is a 20% chance of getting pregnant with each cycle. About 85% of women who have unprotected sex will get pregnant within one year.

How do I know if I am ovulating?

There are changes in body temperature and cervical mucous around ovulation. About one fifth of women feel some achiness or sharp pains around their ovaries at the time of ovulation for a minutes or hours, called "mittelschmerz" or "middle pain" in German. There are also ovulation test kits you can purchase over the counter that measures the amount of luteinizing hormone (LH) in urine that is released with ovulation. LH surges can occur prior to ovulation, or without the release of an egg.

Basil Body Temperature (BBT) Method

Your basil body temperature changes with ovulation. There is normally a slight drop in temperature just prior to ovulation, and a surge in temperature (0.4-1 degree Fahrenheit) with ovulation. Monitoring the BBT can a woman to know when she is ovulating. A special basil body thermometer is needed to do this type of tracking, at a cost of approximately \$10.

Step 1: Take you temperature FIRST THING each morning before you become active (the same time of day is most accurate).

Step 2: Record your temperature everyday on your fertility tracking calendar.

Step 3: You will see that prior to ovulation, your temperature is very consistent. As you get closer to ovulation, you will see a slight decline in temperature. This is followed by a sharp increase with ovulation.

Cervical Mucous Method

Your cervical mucous changes as your cycle progresses. These changes reflect changes in the normal hormone levels in your body that accompany ovulation. For most of your cycle, the mucous is a protective barrier that prevents infections from entering your reproductive tract. However, during ovulation, the mucous changes to allow sperm to get through the cervix, up to the uterus, and into the fallopian tubes for fertilization to occur. At this time in your cycle, your mucous becomes clear, slippery, and stretchy (similar to raw egg whites).

Step 1: Collect the mucous from the vaginal opening with your fingers by wiping them from front to back.

Step 2: Record daily on the fertility tracking calendar the color (yellow, white, clear, or cloudy), consistency (thick, sticky, stretchy), and the feel (dry, wet, sticky, slippery, stretchy) of the mucous.

Step 3: Ovulation occurs on the day that your mucous is most clear, slippery, and most stretchy.

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