

The Bead Method of Fertility Literacy



Fertility Literacy



What is fertility literacy?

Fertility Literacy is the ability of a couple to recognize and interpret the natural signs of a woman's body which indicate whether she is fertile or not and apply this knowledge to either achieving or avoiding pregnancy.

Why is Fertility Literacy Important?



Why is fertility literacy important ?

- It enables couples to space their children in order to maximize the health of mother and baby
- It helps couples seeking pregnancy recognize the most fertile time for conception
- It may help a couple or doctor identify health problems like infections and infertility

Why Is Fertility Literacy Important?

Why should a man become fertility literate?

- It gives him more control over his sexuality
- It helps him to respect and communicate better with his spouse
- It gives him knowledge about couple fertility

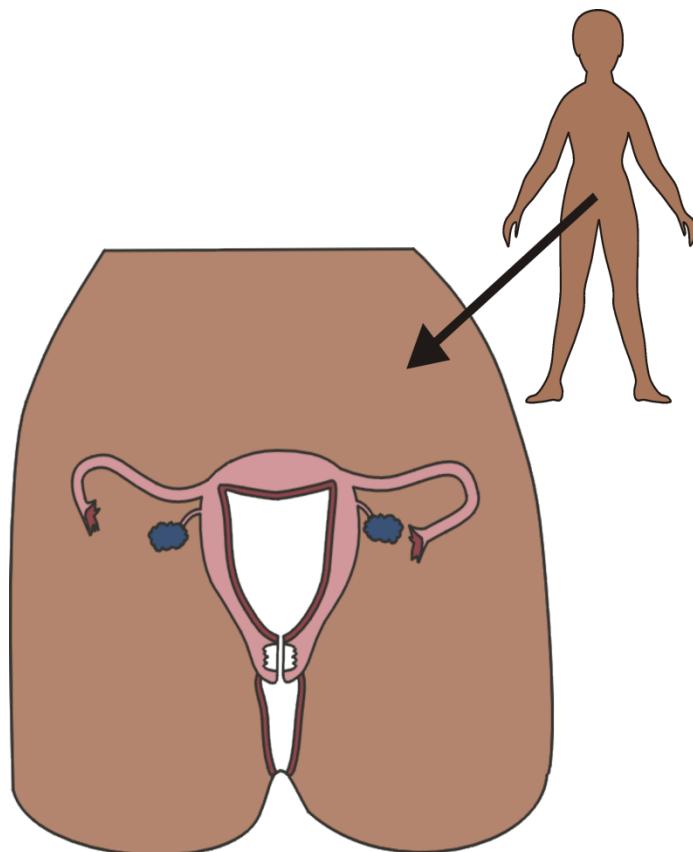
Why should a woman become fertility literate?

- It gives her knowledge about her body
- It gives her knowledge about couple fertility
- It helps her avoid side effects that can occur with artificial birth control

How does fertility literacy help a couple?

- It enables them to share the responsibility of family planning
- It helps build a marriage based upon respect, faithfulness, communication and openness to life and love
- It brings the couple closer together by helping them communicate about their sexual lives

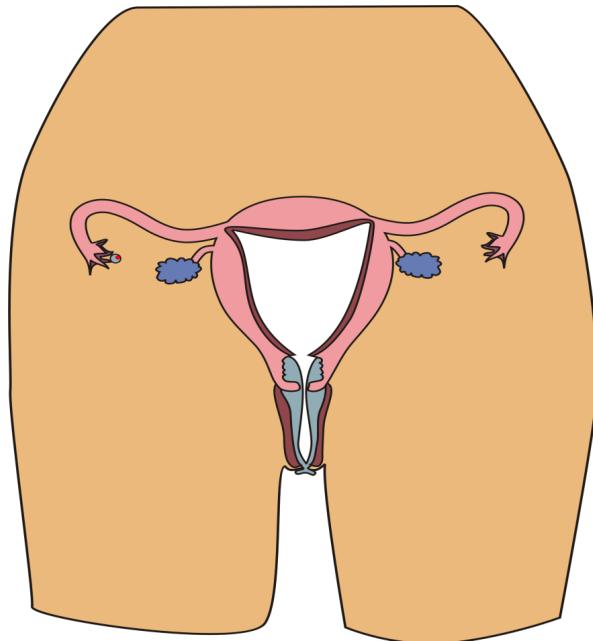
Female Fertility



What are 3 facts of female fertility?

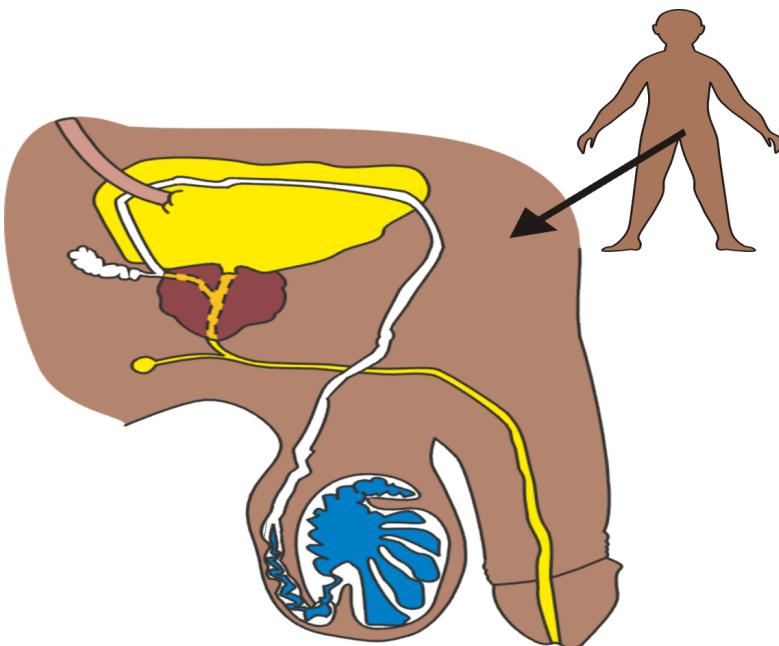
- A woman begins ovulating (maturing and releasing an egg) at the time of puberty
- A woman only ovulates once each cycle
- If fertilization does not occur the egg dies in 12 to 24 hours

Cervical Mucus



- What are 3 facts about cervical mucus?
- Cervical mucus is made by the **cervix**, the lower part of a woman's uterus
- Cervical mucus runs out of the cervix into the vagina and can be detected by a woman at her **vulva** (the opening of her vagina)
- Cervical mucus nourishes the sperm and allows them to enter into the uterus and the fallopian tube where fertilization takes place

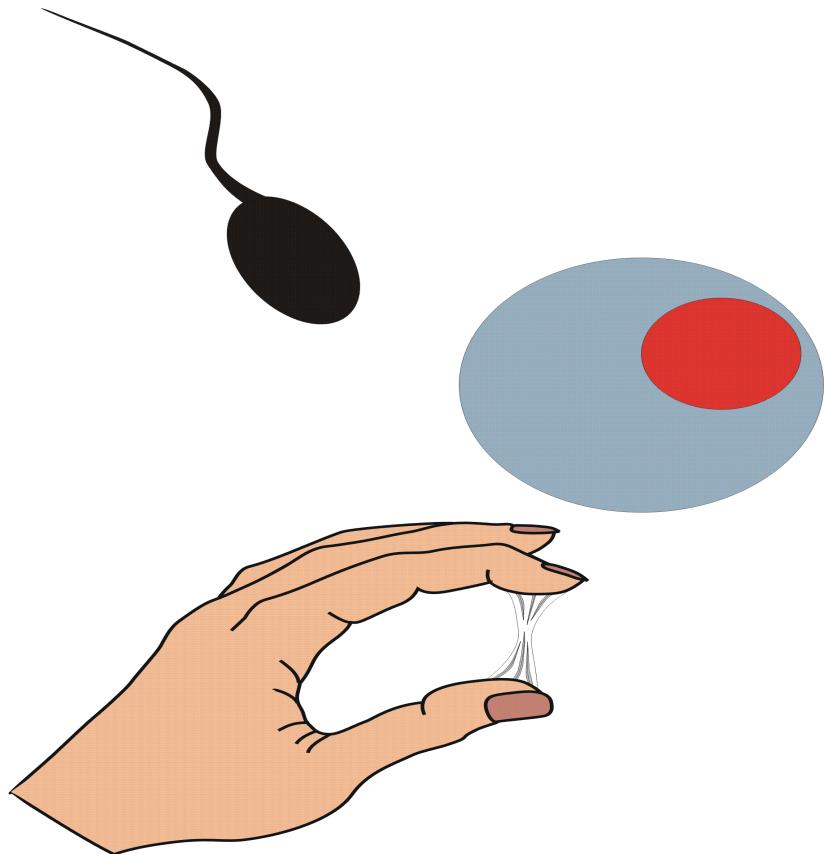
Male Fertility



What are 3 facts of male fertility?

- A man is always fertile (He continually makes sperm in his testicle beginning at the time of puberty)
- Sperm live for 3 to 5 days if there is fertile cervical mucus
- Sperm die in a few hours if there is no fertile mucus

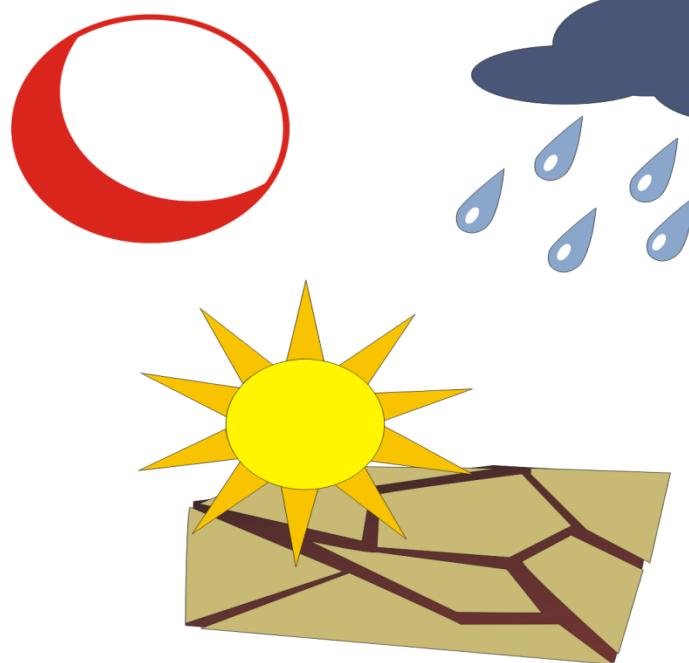
Pregnancy



What are the three things necessary for pregnancy?

- Sperm from the man
- An egg from the woman
- Cervical mucus to nourish the sperm

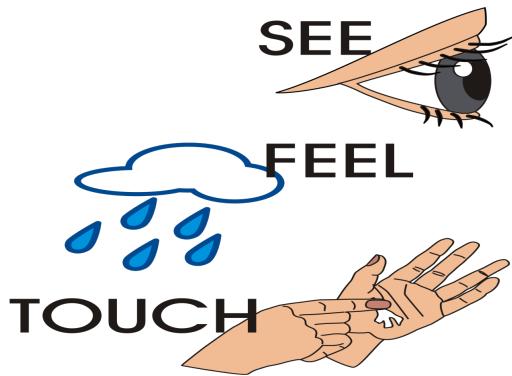
Observations



What are three observations a woman can detect at her vulva?

- Bleeding
- Cervical Mucus
- Dry

How To Make Observation



- By what a woman sees, feels and touches, she will know she is bleeding
- By what a woman sees, feels and touches, she will know she is having cervical mucus
- By what a woman sees, feels and touches she will know she is dry

How To Make An Observation

See: A woman should look at her undergarments, tissue paper and/or fingers after wiping.

- Does she see nothing, blood or mucus?
- What is the color of any mucus?

Feel: A woman should pay attention to the sensation she has at her vulva as she goes about her daily activities.

- Does she feel wetness or dryness?

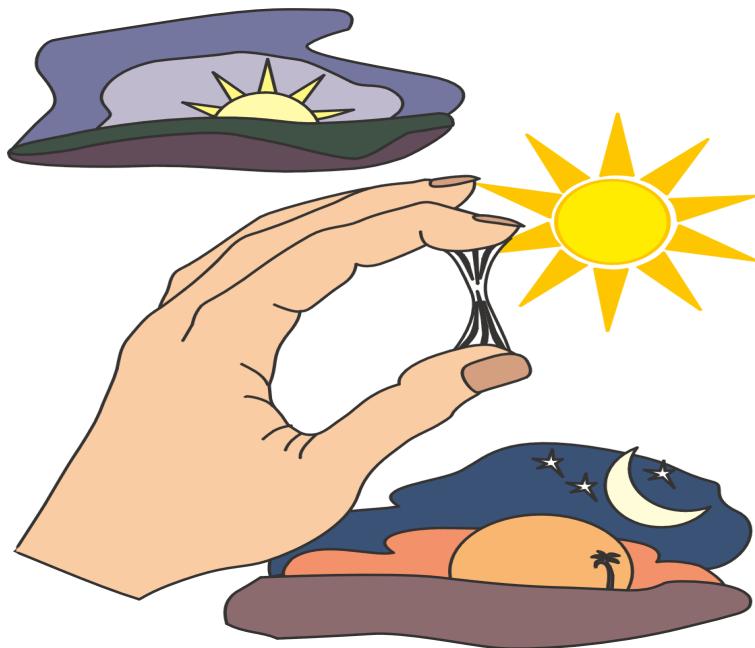
A woman should pay attention to the sensation as she wipes herself **before** and **after** urinating or having a bowel movement.

- Does she feel the tissue paper or fingers glide or pull/chafe?

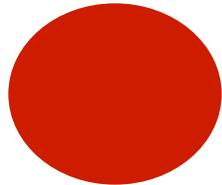
Touch: A woman should touch the tissue after wiping or touch her fingers together if she wiped with fingers.

- If there is mucus, is it slippery and stretchy? Is it sticky, pasty and does it mound up?

When To Make Observation



- A woman checks for Bleeding, Cervical Mucus and Dryness by “feel, see and touch” whenever she uses the toilet
- A woman checks at least 3 times a day



Red Beads

- The red beads represent a woman's menstrual bleeding
- Menstrual bleeding is a completely normal and healthy occurrence
- It is very unlikely that a woman can become pregnant if a couple has intercourse during her menses

Period length (period)

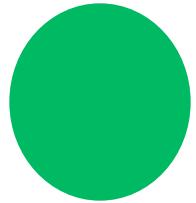
- The number of days of menstrual bleeding experienced
- The first day of bright, red vaginal bleeding is known as "Day One"
- Each day of vaginal bleeding is counted until the bleeding stops

Cycle length:

- The number of days from "Day One" of bleeding through the day before the new period begins

Cycle regularity:

- Cycle length may vary by a few days from cycle to cycle
- A woman with regular cycles can generally count on her period coming roughly every month (most women have regular cycles)
- A woman with irregular cycles may have a long time pass between periods or have widely ranging cycle lengths



Green Beads

- The green beads represent the presence of cervical mucus and/or a sensation of wetness
- The green color represents fertile days

There are three kinds of cervical mucus observations.

Wet :

- A woman *feels* wet and may not *see* or be able to *touch* any mucus

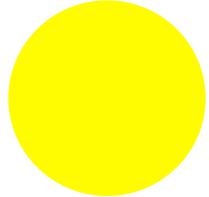
Egg white:

- A woman *sees* clear mucus on her undergarments, tissue paper or fingers when she wipes
- A woman *feels* a wet or slippery sensation at her vulva
- She *touches* mucus that feels wet, slippery and/or stretchy

Sticky:

- A woman does not feel wet, slippery or runny - she may feel dry
- A woman will see white, yellow or cloudy mucus on her undergarments, tissue paper or fingers when she wipes
- A woman will touch mucus that is sticky or pasty and does not stretch

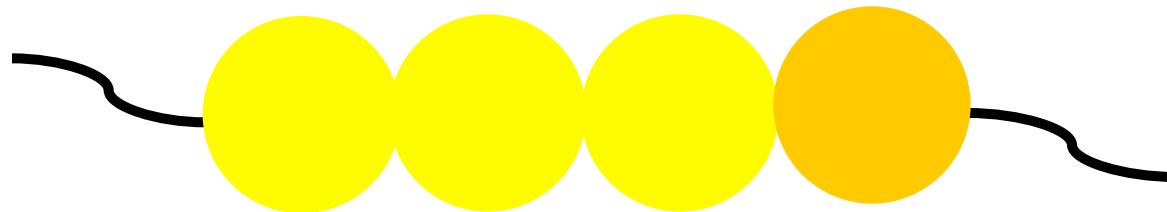
NOTE: A woman may occasionally be confused by wetness that comes from her husband's fluid (semen) that contain sperm. Unlike cervical mucus, semen has little substance; it won't stretch and it won't mound up.



Yellow Beads

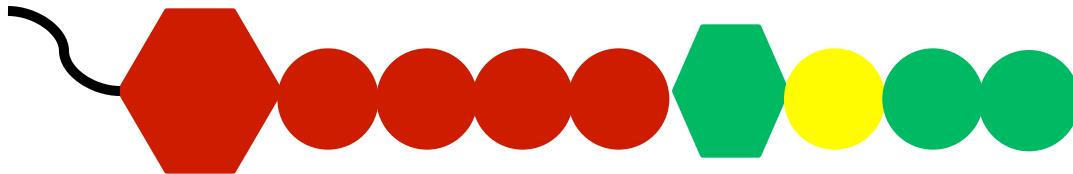
- The yellow beads represents a sensation of dryness
- When a woman is dry she will *feel* no moisture, *see* no mucus and *touch* no mucus

Gold Beads



- Gold beads are used to chart sexual intercourse
 - Symbolizes love and respect of husband and wife for each other
 - Serves as a means of tracking conception and indicates couples' knowledge of system
- **Place a gold bead after the bead of the day to indicate sexual intercourse**

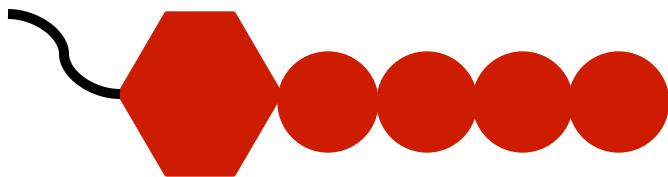
Bead String



- A couple begins with an empty bead string and each night, depending on what the woman has observed during the day, places a bead
 - String the “most fertile sign” of the day

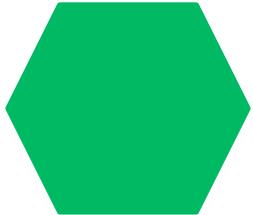
For example, if a woman was dry during the morning and afternoon, but in the evening had egg white mucus, a green bead would be placed on the bead string

Beads With Regular Cycles



- On the first day of bright, red vaginal bleeding place the DAY ONE BEAD
- On subsequent days of bleeding place a small red bead

In this example days 2 – 5 were days of bleeding



Start Up Bead

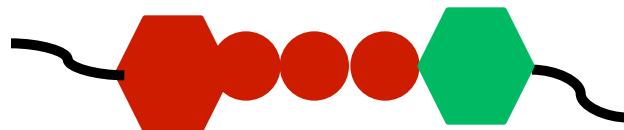
- A couple strings the START UP BEAD after they string the bead for day 5. The START UP BEAD is the bead for day 6.

FERTILITY BEGINS ON THE MORNING OF DAY 6.

Dry Before START UP BEAD



Mucus Before START UP BEAD



- Place a yellow bead if dry before START UP BEAD
- RARE: If mucus before day 6 place START UP BEAD

FERTILITY BEGINS ON MORNING OF START UP BEAD

Dry after START UP BEAD



Mucus After START UP BEAD



Bleeding After START UP BEAD



- Place yellow beads for days of dry after START UP BEAD
- Place green beads for days of mucus after START UP BEAD
- Place red beads for days of bleeding after START UP BEAD

Drying Up Beads



- Place 1st DRYING UP BEAD when change from egg white/wet observation to sticky, pasty and/or to dryness
- Place 2nd, 3rd and 4th DRYING UP BEADS on subsequent days of drying up
- Place yellow beads until the end of cycle for dryness or sticky, pasty mucus

FERTILITY ENDS THE NIGHT OF THE 4TH DRYING UP BEAD.

To Avoid Pregnancy Regular Cycles



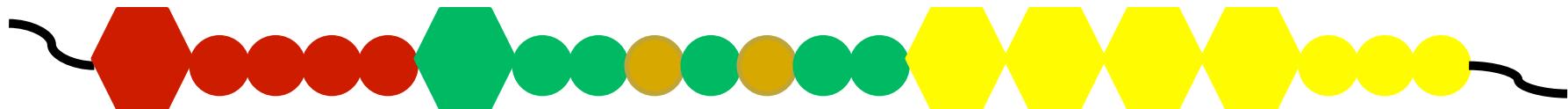
To Avoid Pregnancy

➤ **POSTPONE LOVE MAKING FROM THE MORNING OF THE START UP BEAD (DAY 6) THROUGH THE FOURTH DAY OF DRYING UP. FERTILITY ENDS THE NIGHT OF THE FOURTH DRYING UP BEAD.**

Why abstain on and after the Start Up Bead, if dry?

- Cervical mucus first appears in small amounts and a woman may not detect the first day that the mucus is present
- In certain cycles the mucus may not give enough “warning days” of ovulation

To Achieve Pregnancy Regular Cycles



To Achieve Pregnancy

➤MAKE LOVE ON DAYS WITH GREEN BEADS

The Bead Chart

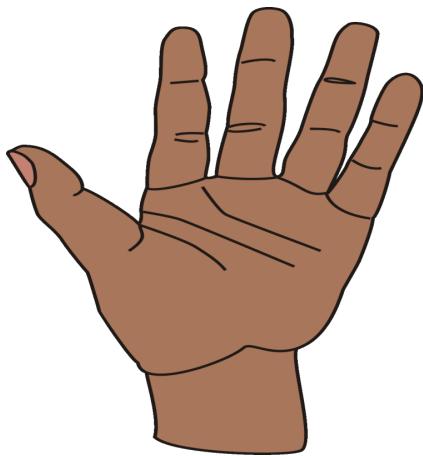
At the end of each day record bead color on the paper chart. This is important in case of an accident with the beads.

If color is not available, use the symbol indicated at the bottom of the chart.

Note all acts of intercourse with a √ in the line marked intercourse.

If you have questions, show your chart or beads to your instructor.

Irregular Cycles



Irregular Cycles – Infrequent or Absent Ovulation

There are five situations in which a woman may not have regular periods.

- A woman just starting her periods (puberty/adolescence)
- A post-partum woman who is waiting for the return of fertility
- A woman ending her periods (premenopause)
- A woman who has recently stopped some forms of hormonal contraception, for example the shot
- A woman who always has irregular periods
 - In these situations use the beads according to Special Instructions
 - A woman with irregular cycles must carefully follow the instructions provided by her teacher

Special Instructions



➤ Bleeding or Spotting place red beads

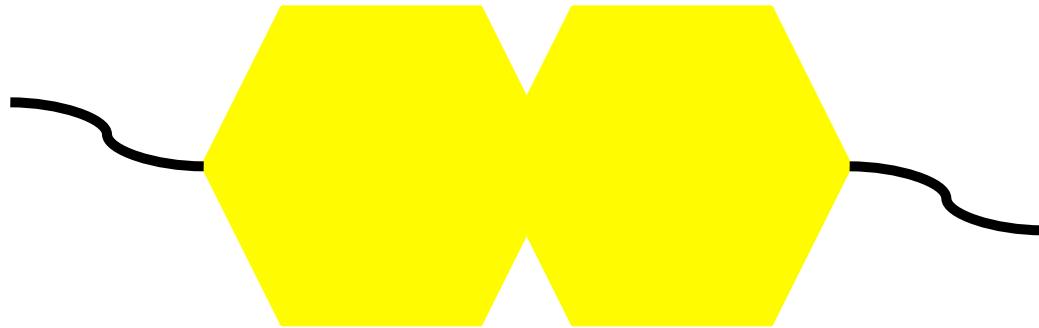


➤ Wet sensation or Egg white mucus place green beads



➤ Day after day dryness or sticky, pasty mucus, place yellow beads

Drying Up Beads



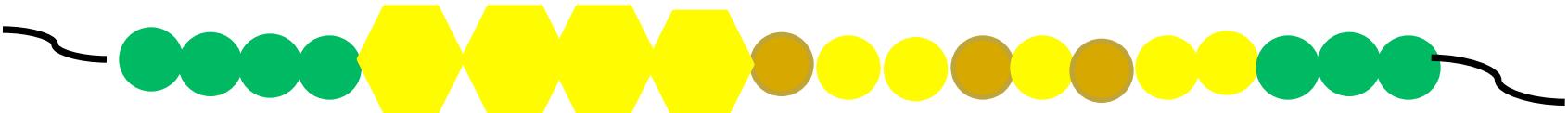
- DRYING UP BEADS are used to mark the change from bleeding/spotting or egg white/wet observation back to dry/sticky observation

Special Instructions

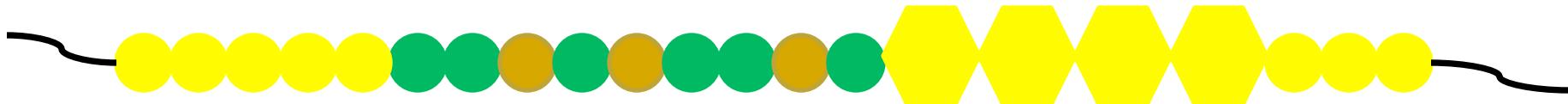


Place 4 DRYING UP BEADS after the cessation of each egg white/wet observation or bleeding

Special Instructions To Avoid Pregnancy



Special Instructions To Achieve Pregnancy



To Avoid Pregnancy

- Do not make love on days with red, green or DRYING UP BEADS
- Make love only on days with yellow beads

To Achieve Pregnancy

- Make love on days with green beads

Breastfeeding



BREASTFEEDING

- Breast milk delivers the perfect balance of nutrition
- Breast milk has living cells and antibodies that fight infections
- Breastfed babies can reach a higher level of intelligence
- Breastfeeding creates a loving, secure bond between the mother and the baby

GUIDELINES

- The baby should begin to nurse immediately after birth or within the first hour
- Early and frequent breastfeeding helps the mother's milk supply come in
- The baby should nurse whenever he or she is hungry or needs soothing
- Initially babies may want to feed every hour
- They should not go more than four hours between feeds
- If a baby gets sick with vomiting, diarrhea or any illness, a woman should continue to breastfeed
- Keep breastfeeding as long as possible
- A woman who is having any trouble with breastfeeding should ask for help

LAM



LAM = “lactational amenorrhea,” to breast feed without bleeding

During LAM a woman does not have to use the beads, keep a paper chart or abstain from intercourse to prevent pregnancy

There are three criteria to LAM:

Exclusive breastfeeding

- The baby receives **only** breast milk from his or her mother and receives no other foods or liquids (no formula, cow's milk, cereal)

No bleeding After Week 8

- Any bleeding in the first 8 weeks is not related to fertility

Baby less than 6 months old:

- **Use the beads according to “Special Instructions” once any of the 3 LAM criteria no longer apply**

Return of Fertility After Lam

Cycle Post-Partum	Start Up Bead (Fertility Begins)
1	Day 10
2	Day 9
3	Day 8
4	Day 7
5 and all subsequent cycles	Day 6

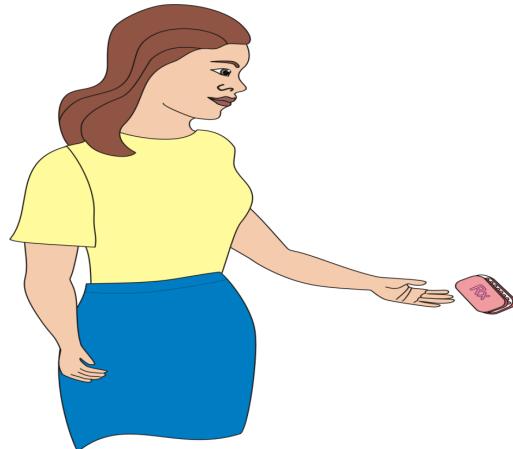
- When menstruation returns use the Post – Partum Transition Chart to determine the start of fertility
- Use Regular Instructions to determine the end of fertility. **FERTILITY ENDS THE NIGHT OF THE 4TH DRYING UP BEAD.**

Bead Chart

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36
Start Date Intercourse	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O		
Start Date Intercourse	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O		

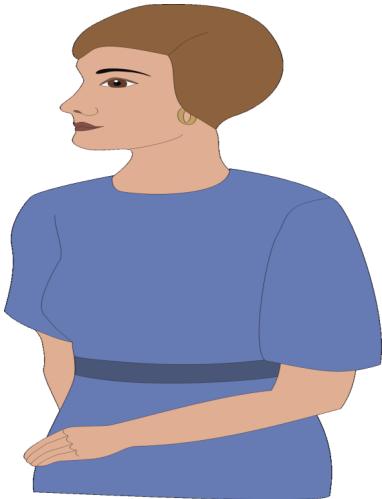
- At the end of each day color the appropriate bead on the paper chart
- Color the beads exactly as they appear on the string
- If color is not available, use the symbol indicated at the bottom of the chart
- Make sure all beads are recorded on paper chart before removing beads
- Note all acts of intercourse with a ♥ in the box marked intercourse
- If you have questions, show your chart or beads to your instructor

After Hormonal Contraception



- Hormone-based contraceptives including the shot (Depo-Provera), the Pill (oral contraceptives) and the implant (Norplant) prevent ovulation
 - Hormone based birth control may also work by interfering with the mucus of the cervix and/or by preventing implantation of an early embryo
 - After stopping the pill, ovulation resumes fairly quickly
 - However, after stopping the shot it may take several months for ovulation to resume.
- A woman will have to follow the instructions provided by her teacher and may have to use the beads with Special Instructions

Pre-Menopause



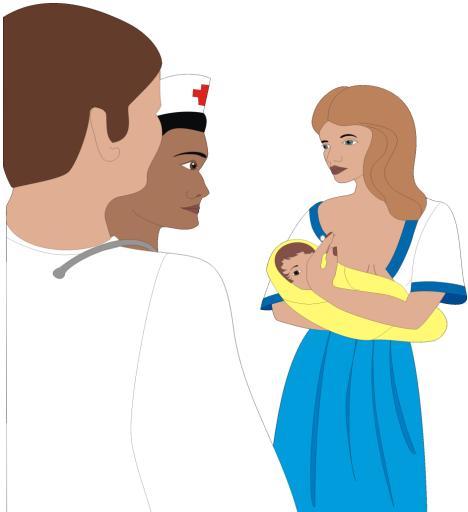
- A couple may be very worried about having a child at this time
- There is a natural decline in fertility
- In the age range between 45 and 49, only 2.5% of women who do nothing to prevent pregnancy will actually conceive and successfully carry a pregnancy
- Some women may notice their cycle lengths become shorter in their 30's and 40's
 - A woman must watch for the early presence of mucus as mucus could appear mixed in with the last days of bleeding
- The amount of mucus a woman makes generally decreases
 - A woman must pay careful attention to her "feel, see and touch."
- Women in pre-menopause may not ovulate regularly and therefore have long cycle lengths
- A woman will eventually have long periods of time with no ovulation and bleeding and many days of sticky mucus or dryness
 - A woman will have to use Special Instructions
- Once a woman has gone a year without bleeding she is considered to be in menopause and not capable of conceiving a child

When to Contact Teachers



- If a woman has difficulty interpreting her cervical mucus observations
- If a woman can not detect any cervical mucus
- If a woman has any questions regarding her chart or rules

When to Contact a Health Care Provider



- If a woman is having irregular bleeding that can not be explained by breastfeeding, etc,
- If a woman is having difficulty conceiving
- If a woman is having heavy periods with cramps and pains
- A woman who does not detect any cervical mucus even after speaking with her fertility literacy teacher
- If a woman is having burning, itching, pain or bleeding in association with sexual intercourse
- If a woman is having burning, itching or pain in association with vaginal secretions

NOTE: Vaginal secretions from an infection are “watery.” They will not have substance like cervical mucus. They won’t stretch like egg white mucus or mound up like sticky mucus. They may smell and be unusual colors.