Natural Fertility for Practice Nurses

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Oxford Clinic
Using the cervical mucus system to identify ovulation.

Using the Billings Ovulation Method™
Research began in 1953. Ongoing research has confirmed validity of this safe, effective and reliable method.

Now used in 122 countries

Drs John and Evelyn Billings
The review, "Types of ovarian activity in women and their significance: the continuum (a reinterpretation of early findings)" has been posthumously published in *Human Reproduction Update 2010.*

The Billings Method - a Kiwi method after all?
Billings Ovulation Method™

Natural Fertility Awareness
Billings Ovulation Method™

A natural way to:

- Appreciate menstrual cycle
- Achieve Pregnancy
- Postpone Pregnancy
- Monitor Reproductive Health
Billings Ovulation Method™

Using the Billings Ovulation Method™ to achieve pregnancy
To whom will we teach the Billings Ovulation Method™?

- Women wanting to achieve pregnancy
- Women awaiting IVF
- Women with failed IVF
- Women who don’t qualify for IVF
- Women not wanting IVF—preferring a natural method
Billings Ovulation Method™

- easy to learn
- applicable to every woman
- natural and simple to use
- no drugs or devices
- no side effects
- reliable
- morally acceptable to all cultures
Male Fertility

Sperm production begins at puberty

Production of sperm continues throughout life

Female Fertility

Begins from puberty

Cyclic – potentially fertile for approx 5-7 days per cycle

Finishes at menopause

= Couple Fertility
The purpose of the Billings Ovulation Method™ is to identify the short period of fertility in each cycle by observing the cervical mucus pattern.
Prerequisites for the Billings Ovulation Method™ to assist in achieving pregnancy are:

• Healthy sperm

• Unblocked fallopian tubes
THE FEMALE REPRODUCTIVE ORGANS

- Uterine cavity
- Endometrium
- Fallopian tube
- Ovary
- Cervix
- Vagina
- Pockets of Shaw
- Vulva (which feels the mucus)
How do the sperm travel from the top of the vagina to the outer one third of the fallopian tube?
THE CERVIX – the neck of the uterus which bears the mucus-producing crypts.
As the egg ripens it produces rising levels of oestrogen. This oestrogen acts on the cervix to produce fertile slippery mucus.
Billings Ovulation Method™

Development of the egg
Development of the lining of the womb
Pituitary hormones controlling the development of the egg and lining of the womb
Ovarian hormones controlling the development of the lining of the womb and stimulating cervical mucus production
How does the Billings Ovulation Method™ teach a woman when she is producing cervical mucus which indicates impending ovulation?
Keeping a Record

Observations made at the vulva as the woman goes about her normal daily activities
No internal examination

Most fertile characteristic of day recorded each evening

One or two words recorded to describe sensation and appearance
Coloured stamps or symbols used on chart
Menstruation, indicated by a red stamp or the symbol  ●
Following menstruation cervix occluded with thick, dense plug of mucus
Plug prevents passage of sperm into cervix and protects body from infection.

Sperm cells kept out in vagina quickly become incapable of fertilizing ovum and destroyed by surrounding cells.
The ovaries are quiescent.
Nothing leaving the cervix, vulva feels dry.
BASIC INFERTILE PATTERN (BIP)
UNCHANGING PATTERN - DRY

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DRY - nothing is felt, nothing is seen

Recorded with a plain green stamp or the symbol |
An unchanging pattern at the vulva indicates infertility.
Discharge remains same day after day, cycle after cycle
Small fragments breaking off lower part of plug results in discharge
Basic infertile pattern of mucus remains the same day after day, cycle after cycle.

There is no entry of sperm into the cervix because of the plug of mucus

This unchanging pattern of infertility is common for many women
Ovaries are active and are producing oestrogen.

Cervix is stimulated – fluid mucus is produced, this frees the plug, sperm can now enter cervix.
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**Change in sensation – no longer dry**

**Recorded with white baby stamp or symbol O**
Ovaries are active and are producing oestrogen

Cervix is stimulated – fluid mucus is produced, this frees the plug, sperm can now enter cervix

Change in vulval sensation or appearance of mucus
### CHANGING PATTERN OF FERTILITY

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| wet | wet | wet | sticky | dry | dry | dry | dry | dry | dry | sticky cloudy | wet clear | slippery clear | slippery clear strings | slippery | slippery |
|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |

#### Changing pattern of fertility
- Ovaries producing greater amounts of oestrogen
- Mucus progressively changing to a wet, slippery sensation
- Clear strings of mucus may be noticed
• the last day of the slippery sensation
• associated with increased sensitivity and with swelling of the vulva
The ovary is now producing progesterone, preparing follicle to shed ovum (ovulation)
# RECOGNISING THE PEAK

Peak is recognised on the day of change
No longer any lubricative sensation at the vulva
Peak is marked with a cross on the record
Ovulation occurs on Peak day or days 1 or 2 after Peak
The ovum can live for up to 24 hours
THE LUTEAL PHASE

From the fourth day past Peak, cervix is closed.
Sperm cannot enter.
If not fertilized, the egg will have disintegrated.
MENSTRUATION

Occurs 11-16 days after ovulation
Plug has left the cervix allowing flow of blood
Start of next cycle
The Rules of the Billings Ovulation Method

Using the slide rule
Delayed ovulation and an unchanging pattern of infertility

- Perimenopausal women
- Breastfeeding/weaning
- Menarche
- Some women coming off contraception, including long term progestogen contraception (mini pill, depo provera, implants)
- Stress
- Athletes, ballerinas
- Women with a low or high BMI
- Women with PCOS
Women can conceive on a single day of change of her cervical mucus symptom.

The purpose of the Billings Ovulation Method™ in assisting sub fertile couples is to teach the woman how to observe her pattern of fertility at the vulva, and to be alert to occasional signals of ovulation.
Use of the Billings Method to achieve pregnancy:

- Accurate recording each night of cervical mucus symptom experienced during the day
- Alternate nights of an unchanging pattern, available for intercourse
- Abstain from intercourse when a change in symptom is noticed. Wait until the sensation at the vulva is slippery. Intercourse recommended over the time of slippery sensation and for one or two days after slippery sensation disappears
- In the absence of a changing developing pattern of cervical mucus use any day of change in the cervical mucus symptom for intercourse.
Billings Ovulation Method™

Benefits

• Accurate, scientific, simple method of regulating fertility
• Increases knowledge, understanding and respect for fertility
• Joint responsibility
• Does no harm
• Develops couple communication and relationships
WOOMB New Zealand
(World Organisation Ovulation Method Billings)

Dr Catherine Black with Dr Evelyn Billings May 2009
Resources for the Billings Ovulation Method™

www.thebillingsovulationmethod.org
www.woombinternational.org

www.fertilitypinpoint.com
www.nfpcharting.com

Telephone: 0800 NZ FERTILITY