

BASAL BODY TEMPERATURE

Charting your Waking Body Temperature, Cervical Fluid and Cervical Position can indicate when you are most fertile during your monthly cycle. Charting can give you crucial information as to when your peak (most fertile) time is, when you have ovulated, when your menstrual period should begin, if you have successfully conceived or if there is a possibility of a hormonal imbalance. Taking your waking body temperature is the first step to charting. This page will give you instruction on how to take your daily temperature and what the information you obtain from them means.

When To Start Taking Temps

Your first temperature should be taken starting with day one of your cycle. Day one of your cycle is the first day you begin your menstrual period.

What Time To Take Temp

Your temperature reading can rise up to 1/10 of a degree for every half an hour taken later than normal or fall 1/10 of a degree for every half hour taken earlier than normal. To get an accurate chart, it is crucial to take your temperature as close as possible to the same time everyday. If you normally get up during the weekdays at 6:00 AM try and take all your temperatures at this time. Weekends can be tough...we all like to sleep in, just remember that each temperature that is not taken at the normal time has to be adjusted (using the 1/10 for every half an hour rule) which will get you close to what your temperature should have been. Always log the time your temperature was taken each day and make a notation if your temperature has been adjusted.

What Kind Of Thermometer

You can use either a traditional glass or digital thermometer, but use the same thermometer throughout your cycle. If you use a traditional glass thermometer always shake it down and make sure you wait for 5 minutes before you read the temperature. If you use a digital thermometer, wait for the beep (usually about 1 minute) before you read and that the temperature will register to 1/10 of a degree. For example: will read 97.56 and not round up to 97.6.

Do I Take Temp Orally

Temperatures can be taken either orally or vaginally. Which ever method you choose, keep it consistent throughout the cycle.

Take Temps Upon Waking

It is important to take your temperature immediately upon waking. Your temperature will fluctuate once you are moving around. If you wake up during the middle of the night and you go back to sleep and get at least three additional hours of uninterrupted sleep, your temperature will be accurate. If you wake up less than three hours before your normal scheduled waking time and have to get up for any reason, it is advisable to take your temperature then (before you get out of bed) and not at your normal waking time. Remember log the time temperature was taken and make a notation as to the adjustment.

The Information Temps Give

Taking your waking body temperature can give you information that is very helpful if trying to conceive. If not pregnant your temperature will reflect two phases during a cycle, three phases if conception has occurred. Your temperatures will vary (fall and rise) during your monthly cycle. They will be lower in the first phase, higher in the second phase and higher still in the third phase once implantation takes place. The rise in temps from the first phase to the second phase is caused from ovulation. Your temps will rise only AFTER ovulation has taken place. Charting temperatures alone without using cervical fluid and position DOES NOT indicate when your most fertile time is (before ovulation) until after ovulation has occurred - which is too late. Therefore we recommend that all indicators are charted to give a more efficient reading of fertility.

CHECKING CERVICAL FLUID

Cervical Fluid is the mucus that is secreted from the cervix. It is produced by the hormone estrogen in the first phase of a monthly cycle. Cervical fluid is an essential element to conception due to its ability to keep sperm alive for up to five days (in fertile quality fluid), protects it from the acidity in the vagina and transports

the sperm to the outer third wall of the fallopian tube where fertilization takes place.

Checking Your Cervical Fluid Internally

Checking your cervical fluid gives you essential information as to your fertile and peak times during your monthly cycle. Start checking your cervical fluid on the first day after your menstrual period and check it multiple times during the day. Also be aware of the overall vaginal sensation (wet or dry) you have had throughout the day without physically checking.

Start with clean hands. You are checking a very sensitive part of your body and do not want to risk the chance of infection.

Take notice of any fluid stains on your underwear. When you are extremely fertile the cervical fluid is abundant and has a high content of water and will leave a fluid stain in the form a circle. Less abundant non fertile fluid is dryer and tends to form lines that are in more of a rectangular shape.

Do a few kegel exercises (squeezing and releasing the vaginal muscles - the same muscles you would use if you were to stop the flow of urination) this will get the fluid flowing from the cervix.

Separate your vaginal lips with one hand and with the other hand slip you middle finger inside the vagina and locate your cervix. We give more detail on the position and its opening of the cervix and how it will change in shape and in feel in the Cervical Position page. Press your finger against the sides of the cervix applying a small amount of pressure (do not apply pressure to the point of pain and make sure your nails are not rough and that they are clean) do this three or four times around the cervix and at its opening. Slowly draw your finger out of the vagina to inspect the fluid.

Rub your middle finger and thumb together and make a mental note on how it feels. Does the fluid feel dry or wet? Is it abundant or stark? Is it thick or thin? Does it feel sticky or creamy? Does it feel slippery like eggwhites? Pull apart you middle finger and thumb, does the fluid make little peaks? Does it Stretch? Does it gum up or crumble? Does the fluid remain on your fingers or is it so thin that it falls from your fingertips? What color is it? Clear, white or yellow? Does the fluid dry up on your fingertips quickly?

Make sure not to confuse semen with cervical fluid. They look and feel very similar. Semen will dry up very quickly upon your fingertips and is more rubbery in consistency. It may also tend to be foamy. Semen is little more white in color rather than clear like eggwhite fluid. To help you identify the difference, when urinating eggwhite cervical fluid will often hit the water and form into a ball while it sinks to the bottom .

Arousal fluid has also been confused with cervical fluid. Again, they look and feel very similar. Arousal fluid like semen will dry up quickly upon your fingertips and is water soluble. If confused as to what fluid is what, take the fluid from your fingertips and dip it into a glass of water. If its cervical fluid it will form a ball and sink to the bottom, if its arousal fluid it will dissolve.

We realize this sounds like a great deal of information to take in and may seem like you are going to spend a lifetime in the bathroom! Don't get discouraged! Once you have done it a few times you will find that checking your cervical fluid is very easy and just takes an extra few seconds. Remember, the information you will gain is a key tool in conceiving that precious and much longed for baby.

What Does Your Cervical Fluid Look Like?

Cervical Fluid will range in abundance, consistency, color and fertile quality due to the increasing level of estrogen within the first phase of your cycle. Typically the changes in fluid will fall into the following pattern. Use the number next to the type of fluid you are experiencing on your BBT chart in the "Cervical Fluid" section.

I. Dry or Light Moisture - INFERTILE

After menstruation for a period of 3 - 5 days you may experience no fluid at all or a small amount of moisture. Color of any existing fluid is clear or slightly white but will dry immediately on your fingertips. Overall sensation is not wet at this time.

2. Sticky or Gummy - INFERTILE

Cervical Fluid then changes to feeling sticky for a period of 2 - 3 days. When rubbed between your fingertips it may give a small amount of resistance, feels slightly gummy or may even crumble. The color will range from clear to white and although you may feel a small amount of moisture the fluid is still dry and does not feel wet at this time.

3. Creamy, Milky, Lotion Like - FERTILE

Cervical fluid now becomes much more abundant and will feel wet from 2 - 4 days. It can appear either thick and creamy or like hand lotion and will form peaks in your fingertips when pulled apart or can be thinner and look milky. Color of the fluid is white or yellow and the overall vaginal sensation is wet.

4. Eggwhite Cervical Fluid - VERY FERTILE

Cervical fluid now reaches its most fertile stage for 1 - 5 days. The fluid will look and have the consistency of eggwhites. It is slippery to the touch and if pulled between the fingertips will stretch 1 - 10 inches! The color can be clear or iridescent and the overall sensation is extremely wet.

5. Dry, Moist or Sticky - INFERTILE

Cervical fluid will now change drastically due to the drop in estrogen and the surge of progesterone following ovulation. It can be dry, watery, moist or sticky and will remain in that stage until the end of your monthly cycle - which is the day before your menstrual period begins. Any fluid at all will dry up quickly upon your fingertips, can range from no color to white and your overall vaginal sensation will be dry at this time.

THE THIRD INDICATOR - CERVICAL POSITION

Logging the position of your cervix on your fertility spreadsheet is a key element in charting. When your cervical position rises within your body, the opening gets larger and feels soft to the touch, this is an indication of being at your most fertile time.

How To Check Your Cervical Position

Begin checking your cervical position after you have completed your menstrual cycle. When checking your cervical fluid or position - insure that your hands are clean and fingernails are not rough.

There are a few positions that you can be in to check your cervical position. It will depend on what you feel the most comfortable with. Which ever position you choose should remain consistent throughout the length of your cycle. Some women prefer and have no problem checking while sitting on the toilet - other women find it difficult to locate their cervix in this position during fertile time and may need to either squat down on the floor with knees bent and open or putting one foot upon the bathtub or toilet seat.

With one hand holding back the vaginal lips insert the other hands middle finger into your vagina. Move your finger up until you hit your cervix. It should feel like a rounded cylinder shaped mass within your body.

The position of your cervix will vary within your cycle. It will be low in the first phase and start to rise closer to ovulation and then will lower again after ovulation has occurred. When checking for the first time and are unsure what low or high should feel like, when high your cervix is almost unreachable with you fingertip.

Once charting and have gone the changes your cervical position takes on - you will have a better understanding of what a low, mid and high cervical position is.

Charting Your Cervical Position

You should begin checking your cervical position the first day after your menstrual period. Cervical position can be monitored throughout the day and be done while checking your cervical fluid. Write one of the appropriate letters on your chart in the "Cervical Position Description" section.

Low Cervical Position

Right after your menstrual period, the position of your cervix will be low and easily reached by your fingertip. This should be charted on your spreadsheet by logging "L" or "Low". At this time, a cervical position of low

is considered infertile.

Mid Cervical Position

Closer to ovulation your cervix will start to rise. This is caused by the increasing amount of progesterone in your body. Your cervix will start moving a little higher within your body but can still be reached rather quickly with your fingertips. This should be charted on your spreadsheet by logging "M" or "Mid". At this time there is a possibility of being fertile.

High Cervical Position

A day or two prior to ovulation your cervix will rise to its highest point. It moves to this level due to the amount of progesterone within your body. When checking for the position you will notice that it is almost difficult to reach your cervix and should be logged on your spreadsheet as "High". Note: Due to the unique way the Charting Consultation Service logs to show at a glance when your peak time is - the letter "X" (extra high) is used for their fertility chart. At this time you are considered extremely fertile.

Write one of the appropriate letters on your chart in the "Cervical Softness Description" section.

Hard Cervix

When you begin checking your cervix the day after your menstrual period has ended, you will notice that the feel of your cervix is rather hard. It will feel almost as you are touching the tip of your nose. This should be logged on your cervix as "H" or "Hard". At this time you are considered infertile.

Soft Cervix

Closer to ovulation your cervix will start to soften. This is caused by the increasing amount of progesterone in your body at this time. It may feel almost like touching your bottom lip. This should be logged on your spreadsheet as "S" or "Soft". When cervix is soft and high you are considered extremely fertile.

Closed Cervical Opening

When you begin checking your cervix the day after your menstrual period begins you will notice that there is a small slit or a tiny round hole (usually women who have given birth will feel a small hole instead of a slit) which is the opening where sperm enters. The opening will be very small at this time and should be logged on your fertility chart as "C" or "Closed". When your cervical opening is at its smallest (closed) you are considered infertile.

Open Cervix

Closer to ovulation you will notice that your cervical opening begins to enlarge. This makes it easier for sperm to enter into the cervix. The slit or hole will become larger and will feel very open. This should be logged on your fertility spreadsheet as "O" or "Open". When your cervical position is High, Soft and Open you are considered extremely fertile.