

Fertility Awareness & The Sympto-thermal Method

Understand your body, menstrual cycle and fertility



What is Fertility Awareness?

Fertility Awareness (sometimes called Natural Family Planning) is a process whereby you learn about your menstrual cycle & signs of fertility, so that you can know when you are fertile, and when you are not during each menstrual cycle.

There are 3 main methods of Fertility Awareness that use signs of fertility:

- Sympto-thermal Method
- Billings Method
- Creighton Model

Other practices such as the Calendar / Rhythm method, rely solely on your cycle length to determine when you might be fertile, and are not reliable.

Using withdrawal or 'pull out' is not recommended.

What is the Sympto-Thermal Method? (aka STM)

The most effective Fertility Awareness method for avoiding pregnancy is the Sympto-Thermal Method. STM is the researched and scientific practice of observing your body, understanding its changes and knowing when you are fertile and when you are not.

Some of the benefits:

- Can be used at any stage of your reproductive life, including peri-menopause
- Hormone free contraception
- Support from an accredited educator
- Only need pen, paper and a basic thermometer
- Understand how your body works
- Know when your period is due
- No ongoing costs

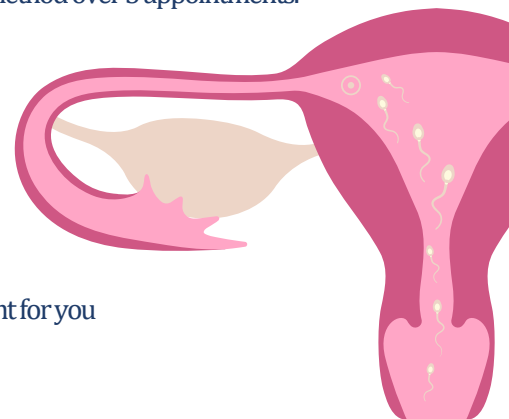
The method involves recognising & recording:

- Cervical mucus & Sensation
- Basal body temperature
- Optional - checking changes to the cervix

NFNZ Educators teach the method over 3 appointments.

Things to consider:

- Cost - Our educators charge a fee, however NFNZ may be able to provide a subsidy
- Time - You need a few mins out of each day to record your signs of fertility
- Current medications and/or diagnosis - Talk to one of our educators to see if the STM is right for you



Find a Fertility Educator

We have Fertility Educators all over the country, who can meet with you in person, or online. visit www.naturalfertility.co.nz click 'Find and Educator'

What's the reliability of the Sympto-thermal Method ?

Effectiveness and pregnancy rates are based on a person being taught by a trained and accredited Natural Fertility Educator.

- Aotearoa New Zealand's guidance on Contraception Consultation Paper June 2020 rated the STM as having a 99% efficiency.
- The STM is endorsed by the World Health Organisation, and state the effectiveness of the STM is 99%. Pregnancy rate is 2 pregnancies per 100 women per year.
- Petra Frank-Herrmann's research states that the reliability of the STM is 99.4%, with 1.8 per 100 women having an unintended pregnancy.

99%
effective

What about cycle tracking apps & devices, or self study to learn about Fertility Awareness?



Your cycle & fertility patterns are unique to you - no two people's patterns are the same! Making choices about your fertility based on advice from a friend, book, app or website is risky.

NFNZ Educators take the guess work out, and eliminate confusion by providing you with accurate information about your unique signs of fertility. Once you know how to interpret your own signs, we recommend the 'Read your Body' app.

Safe sex

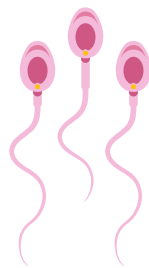
Even if you use Fertility Awareness, safe sex is still important:

- Being safer sexually means discussing safer sex with your partner, and showing respect for your partners and yourself
- For protection against sexually transmissible infections (STIs), you should always use a barrier (condom, oral dam)
- If you have one long-term sexual partner you should use condoms until you have both been tested for STI's.
- While learning a method of Fertility Awareness, it is important that you either abstain or use a condom - this is until you understand how to apply the method.

Avoid Pregnancy Naturally

The STM is an effective contraceptive choice:

- Hormone free contraception option
- Use this method with or without barriers such as condoms
- Partner participation is encouraged, allowing for a shared approach
- If you are breastfeeding, we also teach the Lactational Amenorrhea Method



Trying to get pregnant?

The STM can support your fertility journey:

- You will learn how to identify your most fertile time, which will increase your chances of conceiving in any given cycle
- It can help to identify hormonal concerns, or other issues that may effect your fertility.

66 Did you know that it takes 6-12 months for the average kiwi couple to conceive?

Natural Fertility NZ (NFNZ) trains and accredits Fertility Educators to teach Fertility Awareness. NFNZ also offer CME to Doctors, Nurses & Midwives, Workshops for community groups, and In School Education. NFNZ is a registered charity CC24974 - NFNZ aims to increase the awareness and accessibility of fertility education for all.