



*Fox Valley Reproductive Medicine (FVRM) is an independently physician-owned organization.*

## Trying to Get Pregnant: Your Monthly Menstrual Cycle

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Understanding how your menstrual cycle works and the timing of it each month can be a big help if you are trying to get pregnant. Here's a look at some of the basics:

- The average menstrual cycle is 26-30 days
- The first day of your period also marks the first day of a new cycle
- Women are born with about one million eggs, but only 300-400 total are released through ovulation – typically just one per month
- Once an egg travels down the fallopian tube, it lives only 12-24 hours
- Sperm can survive up to 3-5 days

On the first day of a woman's period, hormones are released that stimulate eggs to grow inside the ovaries. About 6-10 days later, these same hormones help thicken the uterus lining to prepare for the possible implantation of a fertilized egg. For women who ovulate regularly, ovulation usually occurs anywhere from 11-21 days after the cycle begins.

During ovulation, the luteinizing hormone (LH) of the brain rises and causes the most ripened egg to be released. Many women will notice that their cervical mucus resembles an egg-white substance and becomes somewhat slippery around ovulation – this helps the sperm reach the egg more easily.

Since women are typically most fertile just before or during ovulation, it is helpful to plan intercourse accordingly.

So how do you know when you're approaching ovulation and most fertile? If you're on an average 28-day cycle, for example, identify the date that you expect your next period to start. Count back 14 days and plan to have intercourse during the few days before and after if you are trying to conceive.

Methods that can help track ovulation include:

- Online ovulation calculators – help you predict when you will ovulate by entering the date of your last period and cycle length
- Basal body temperature – your body temperature goes up as you approach ovulation; taking your temperature each morning and charting the changes can help pinpoint your ovulation date
- Ovulation prediction kits – a variety of at-home kits are available to help track ovulation through daily testing that measures the surge in the LH hormone

During the last phase of your menstrual cycle, the uterus has thickened to prepare for implanting a fertilized egg.

If an egg hasn't implanted, the lining will start to disintegrate and your period will begin. If an egg has implanted, chances are, you have been successful in trying to conceive and will soon be greeted by a positive pregnancy test!

### **FVRM is here!**

For more details on a healthy pregnancy:  
Call 920-560-5585 today