

6 Reasons to use Fertility Awareness Methods (FAMs)

aka Natural Family Planning

The Methods Work

Fertility Awareness Methods (FAMs) offer a sound approach to fertility management rooted in a biological understanding of how feminine fertility works.

Men are typically fertile 24/7/365, but a woman's fertility varies throughout her menstrual cycle. Variations in fertility can be reliably known through a woman's bodily symptoms, including body temperature, and cervical mucus, softness, and ascension. These methods teach women (and their spouses) to recognize these signs so that they can make informed decisions about the timing of sexual intimacy.

The Best Methods You've Never Heard Of

One reason people are unaware of fertility awareness options is that these methods are relatively new, having been developed in their current form within the past fifty years.

There is a lot of misinformation about FAMs in mainstream culture. Some equate the methods to religious fundamentalism, when they are non-sectarian and rooted in simple biological science. Others make the assumption that couples who avoid the Pill or barrier methods of contraception desire to have no control over their fertility.

In the medical community, an attitude exists that modern fertility awareness methods are no different than the older Rhythm Method, and are therefore not effective. Even today, many physicians graduate medical school without receiving basic, objective information about chemical-free and barrier-free methods of fertility management.

FAMs are challenging but not overwhelming

Like anything worthwhile, fertility awareness methods require self-discipline, both in terms of observing the signs of fertility and in the periodic abstinence from sexual intercourse that is required for couples seeking to avoid or postpone pregnancy. But the challenges are less daunting over time as couples become more attuned to the signs of fertility. And the

truth is that chemical and barrier methods of contraception also require self-discipline, so there's no reason to avoid FAMs just because they take effort.

Fertility Awareness Methods are Totally Green

Many today are concerned about the impact their choices have upon their own health and the environment. Since FAMs require no artificial hormones or chemicals, they have no risky or annoying side effects. Plus, there is no damage to the ecosystem, in contrast to the growing effect on fish and other wildlife impacted by the release of hormones and chemicals in the urine from those taking the Pill.

Fertility Awareness is Marriage Insurance

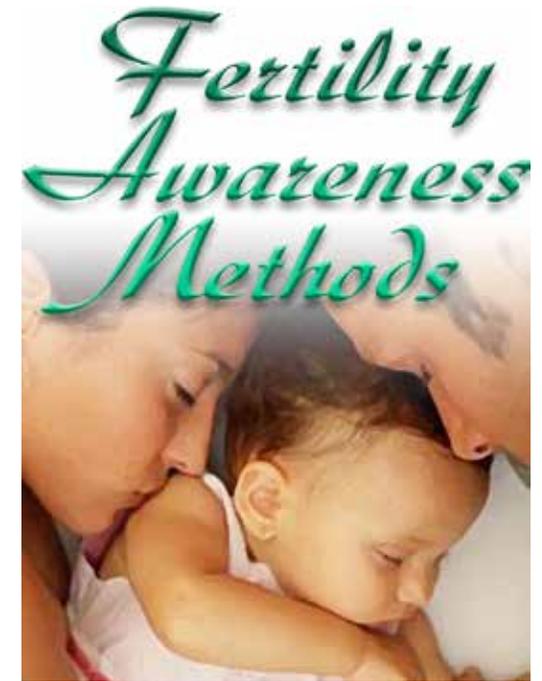
Studies show that couples who practice FAMs have a divorce rate of 2-3%. While some success may be attributed to correlation and not just causation, the practice of fertility awareness methods clearly strengthens the virtues necessary for a happy marriage.

First of all, couples who practice FAMs are typically more communicative about the intimate aspects of their lives. Family planning is not just the woman's concern, but involves both spouses in decision making, and often in symptom observation as well, fostering a spirit of intimate conversation and mutual respect.

Secondly, the periodic sexual abstinence sometimes required by the practice of FAMs builds the very virtues necessary for a healthy marriage: self-control, tenderness, patience, and understanding. Couples learn that there are times to pursue sexual desire, and times to abstain. This virtue can also help spouses in their practice of marital fidelity, as they have greater strength to resist temptations outside the marital relationship.

Fertility Awareness Fosters a Love for Children

People often think that when couples who practice FAMs have a larger family, it must mean that these methods don't work. The truth is, couples who practice FAMs often develop a greater appreciation for the gift of children.



*Managing your fertility
without chemicals,
hormones, or barriers*



Inside this brochure:

- ❖ *Frequently asked questions*
- ❖ *6 reasons to go natural*
- ❖ *Lexington area class schedule*
- ❖ *On-line options*

LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY AREA

FAQs about Fertility Awareness Methods

What are Fertility Awareness Methods?

Fertility awareness methods (FAMs) can be used to achieve or postpone pregnancy based on the awareness of a woman's fertility. You may also have heard the term "Natural Family Planning."

These scientific methods, 98% effective when practiced faithfully, derive from the fact that a woman's fertility varies throughout her menstrual cycle and can be determined through the observation of some physical symptoms.

For example, in the days surrounding ovulation, a woman's cervix ascends and softens, her body secretes cervical mucus (to facilitate the sperm's movement), and her temperature rises slightly. Through signs like these, a couple can determine the fertile phase of a woman's cycle. Different FAMs—there are several—focus on different symptoms. To achieve pregnancy, couples engage in intercourse during the fertile phase. To postpone pregnancy, couples abstain from intercourse during the fertile window.

No hormones, drugs, devices or surgical procedures are used in the practice of FAMs, nor is the environment affected though the release of artificial hormones into water systems via urine as the Pill does. Plus, practicing FAMs increases couple communication and strengthens marriage.

Is this another name for the Rhythm Method?

No, this is a common misconception. The Rhythm Method tries to predict ovulation by using a calendar exclusively. If a woman has irregular cycles, the accuracy of the Rhythm Method is limited. No wonder the Rhythm Method inspired several jokes (Vatican Roulette, anyone?!). Sadly, couples who falsely equate NFP with the Rhythm Method are hesitant to entrust their Family planning to fertility awareness methods. The truth is that FAMs assume that every woman is irregular at least some of the

time. If her fertile time comes earlier or later than usual, she knows about it because of certain physical signs she can identify. FAMs are effective at any stage of a woman's

reproductive life and can be used by women with irregular cycles, women who are breast feeding, and women in pre-menopausal years.

2020 In-person Group Classes (Central Kentucky)

Cost: \$135/couple (includes textbook, thermometer, charts, etc.) These classes teach the "sympto-thermal" method, observing symptoms like body temperature, cervical mucus, position, and softness. Registration for classes is done via www.ccli.org (click on "Search/Register for Classes" button).

Series 1: January 19, February 16, March 15

Sundays, 2–4:30 pm

Cathedral of Christ the King, 299 Colony Blvd. in Lexington
Parish Life Center meeting room • Brett & Julie Ervin
(859) 576-7980 • ervins_in_ky@windstream.net

Series 2: March 29, April 26, May 31

Sundays, 2–4:30 pm

Cathedral of Christ the King, 299 Colony Blvd. in Lexington
Parish Life Center meeting room • Brett & Julie Ervin
(859) 576-7980 • ervins_in_ky@windstream.net

Series 3: September 20, October 18, November 15

Sundays, 2–4:30 pm

Cathedral of Christ the King, 299 Colony Blvd. in Lexington
Parish Life Center meeting room • Brett & Julie Ervin
(859) 576-7980 • ervins_in_ky@windstream.net

Individual Instructors in Various Methods

• **Johnna Wilford** is a certified Lexington-area instructor of the symptothermal method of NFP via SymptoPro. Instruction consists of three two-hour sessions that meet over a month with on-going follow-up. Cost is \$100. Email Johnna Wilford at johnnawilford@gmail.com.

• **Sarah Tramonte** teaches the Marquette method remotely, which uses a ClearBlue Fertility Monitor in conjunction with observing other biological symptoms. Cost is \$200 plus the purchase of the monitor. Call Sarah at (404)798-9686 or email at nfpmarquette@gmail.com.

• **Rita Johnson** of Northern KY is a certified instructor and FertilityCare practitioner in the Creighton Model, which teaches standardized mucus observations with an introductory session and follow-ups. To inquire about cost or other specifics, contact Rita via her website at naturalfertilitycare.org/

On-line & home study options via Couple-To-Couple League (see ccli.org)

LIVE ON-LINE OPTION • Cost: \$135 plus shipping

With this option, you both take a live class together, even from separate locations. You'll get premium support from a teaching couple who can answer your questions face-to-face (virtually) before, during, or after class.

SELF-PACED ON-LINE OPTION • Cost: \$135

This option is best for couples with varied schedules that makes it hard to attend live on-site or virtual classes together. Couples will enjoy the flexibility to proceed at their own pace, and will receive basic support, with access to a teaching couple via email or phone.

Understanding the various NFP Methods:

Choose one right for you—do your own research

NFP methods can be grouped into three categories:

1. **THE OVULATION METHOD**, in which a woman learns how to identify the normal, healthy, cervical mucus which indicates the days that sexual intercourse is most likely to result in pregnancy. The Creighton Model is one example.
2. **SYMPTO-THERMAL METHODS**, which observe several signs of fertility and cross-check two or more of the signs to pinpoint ovulation. Symptoms include basal body temperature and cervical mucus with other optional indicators. Couple-to-Couple League and SymptoPro are two examples.
3. **THE SYMPTO-HORMONAL MODEL** observes several signs of fertility and adds a fertility monitor for the self-detection of reproductive hormones in the urine. Example: The Marquette Model.