

NC Department of Health and Human Services
Fertility Awareness Based Methods of Family Planning (FABMs): What are they and how do they work webinar?

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UNC-Chapel Hill

February 5, 2020

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My story



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Presentation Overview

- What are Fertility Awareness Based Methods of family planning (FABMs)
- The Female Cycle: What Happens and Why?
- Estimating the effectiveness of FABMs
- Overview of Effectiveness of specific FABMs

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What are Fertility Awareness Based Methods (FABMs)?

Methods that allow people to track one or more signs of fertility (biomarkers) to determine the days during each menstrual cycle when the chances of conception would be highest and lowest.

FABMs can be used to:

- Avoid pregnancy
- Plan pregnancy
- Monitor health

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Who uses FABMs?

- Likely underrepresented in national surveys
- Growing over the last decade in the US
 - US National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG)
 - US Title X (Family Planning)
- Currently: 2% - 3% of all contraceptive users globally
- 0.31% of LHD family planning clinic users in NC

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Observable Fertility Signs

Cervical Fluid

Basal Body Temperature

Day of menstrual cycle

Urinary Hormone Detection

Cervical Position

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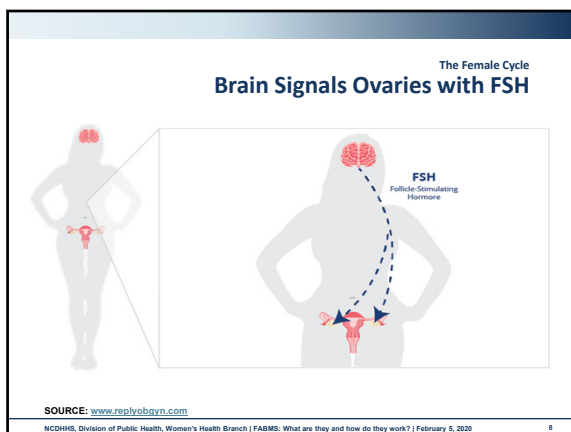
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Major Categories of FABMs with some examples

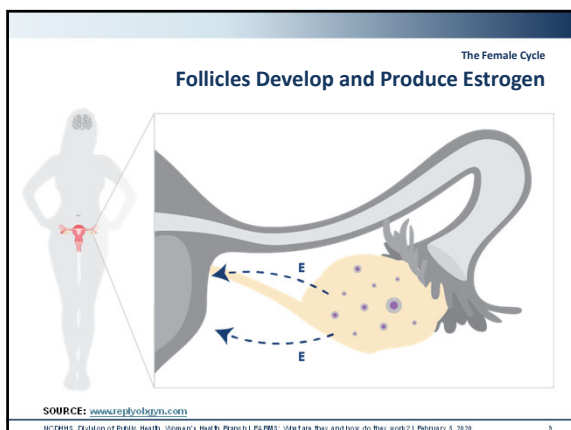
FABM category	Examples of FABM methods
Calendar-based (menstrual cycle)	Dynamic Optimal Timing, Rhythm Method, Standard Days Method, many "Period trackers"
Cervical mucus-based	Billings Ovulation Method, Creighton Model Fertility Care System, Two-Day Method
Temperature-based	Bioself, Daysy, Marshall, Natural Cycles
Symptothermal (multiple indicator methods)	Couple to Couple League, Justisse, Sensiplan, Symptopro, Taking Charge of Your Fertility
Urinary hormone-based	Marquette, Persona

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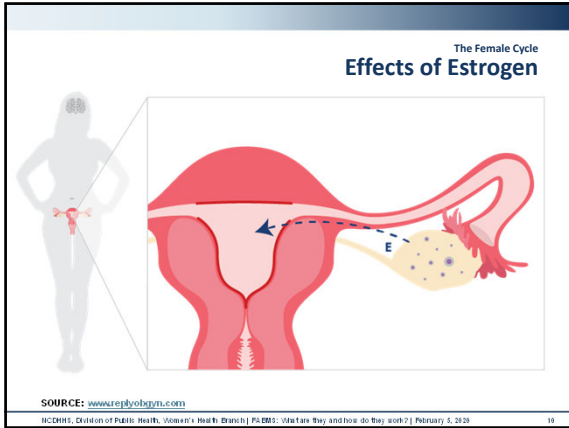
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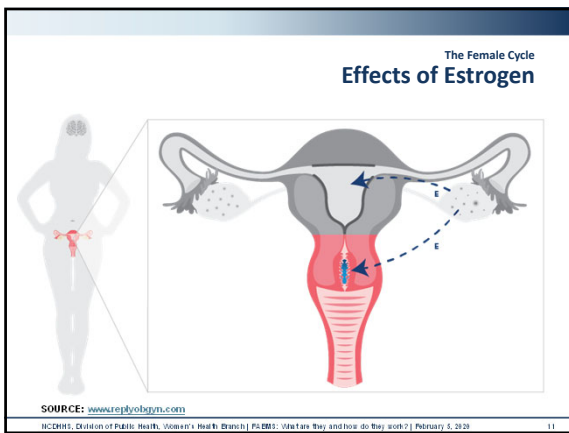
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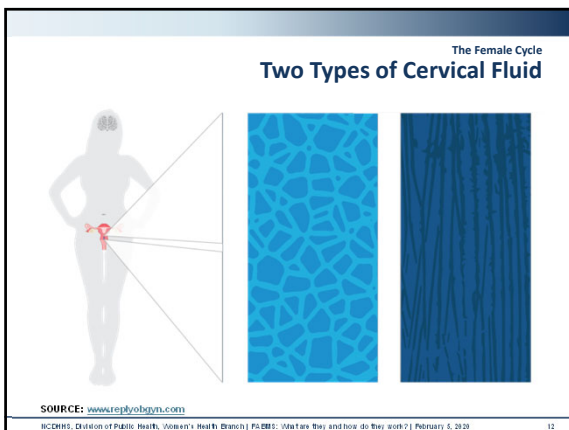
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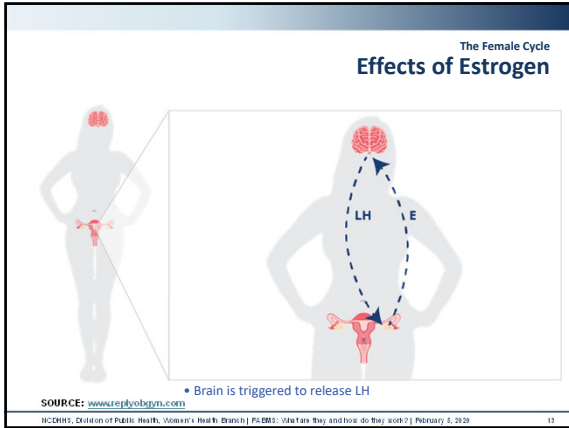
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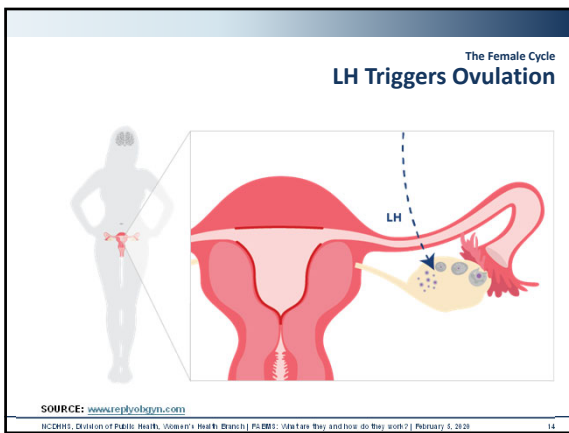
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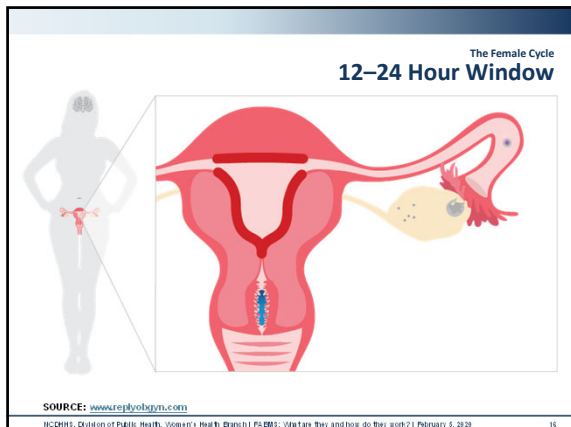
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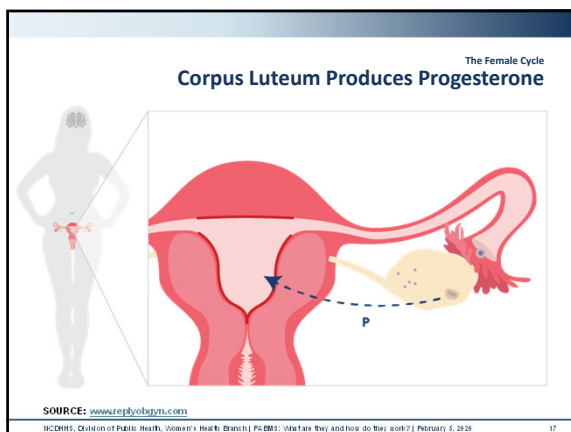
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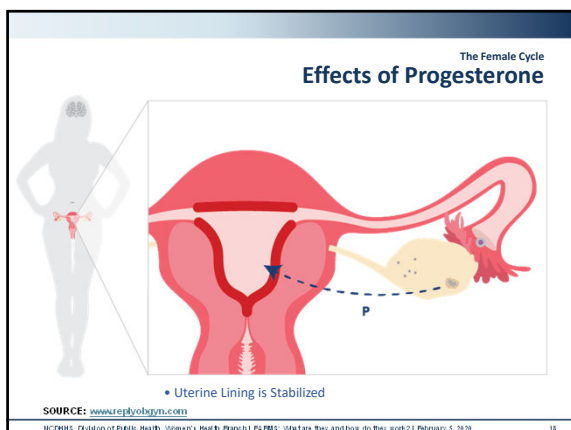
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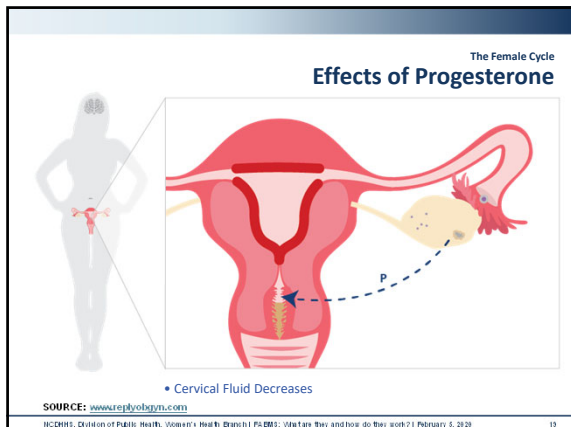
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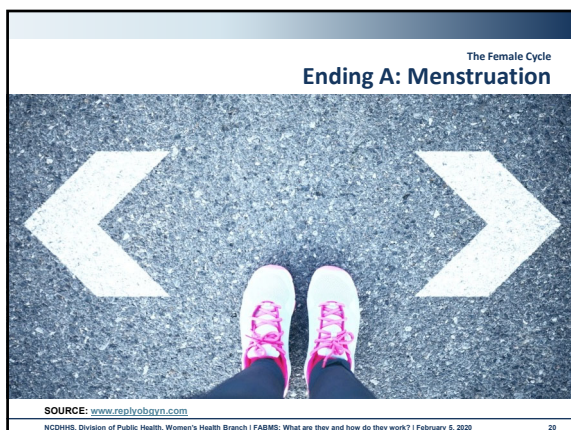
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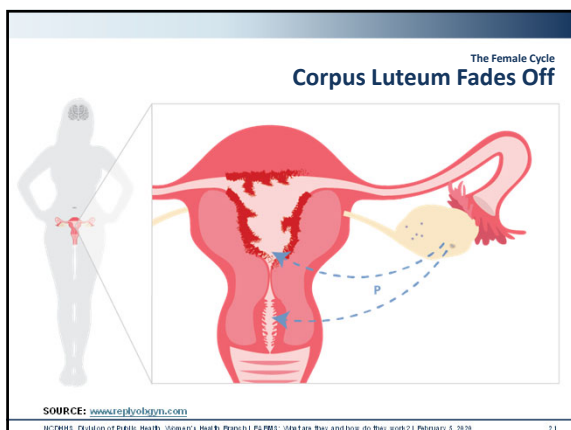
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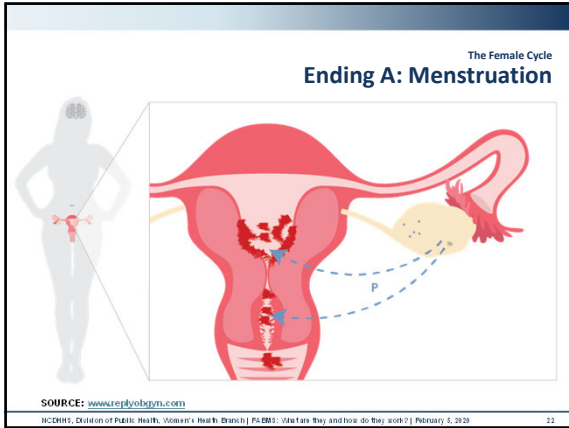
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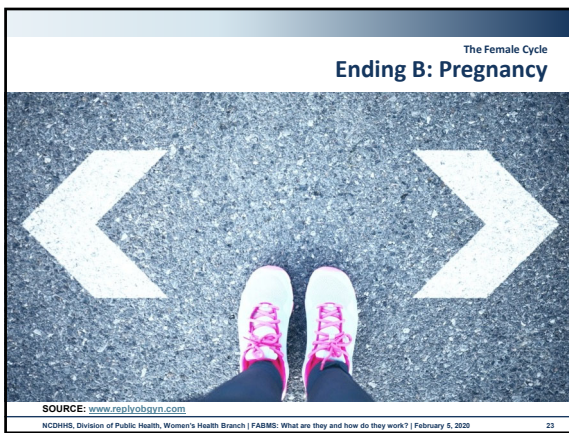
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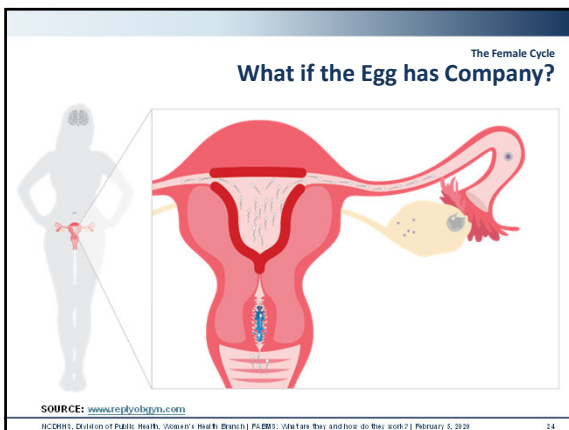
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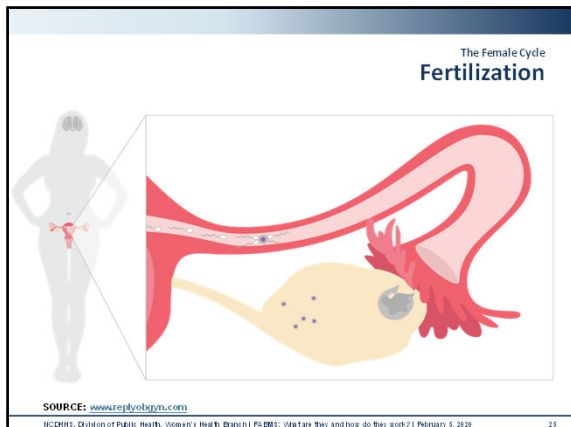
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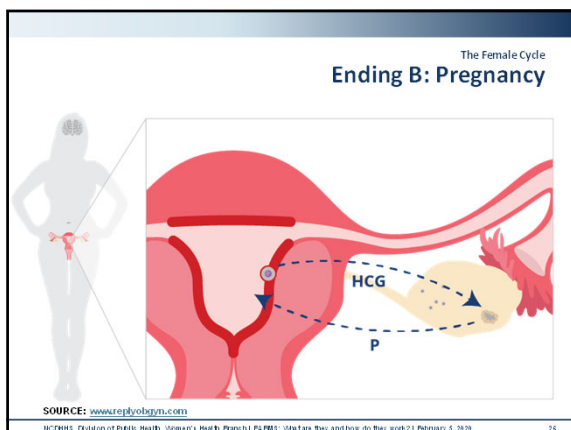
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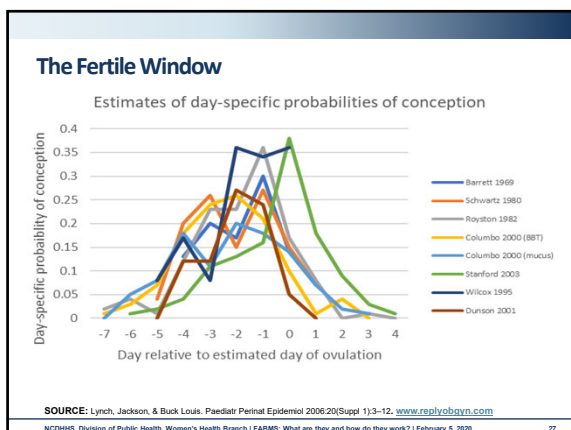
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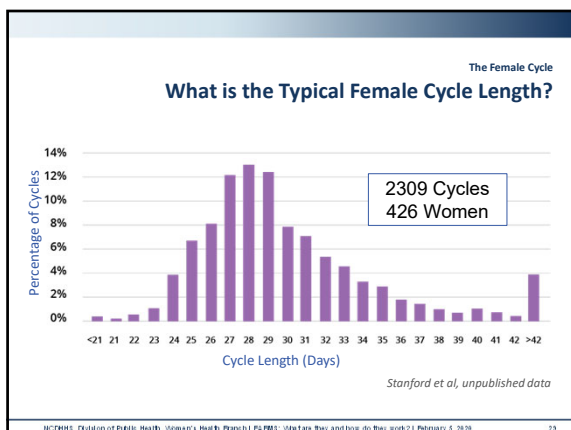
The Female Cycle

What is the Typical Female Cycle Length?



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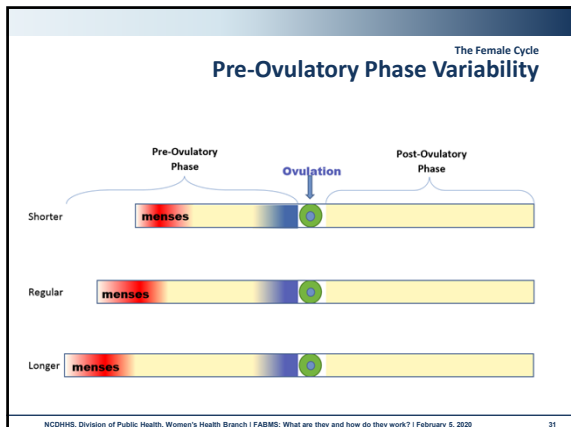
The Female Cycle

Why Do Cycle Lengths Vary?



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What is "normal" variation?

- FIGO: more than 20 days of variation is "irregular" (>95%)
- For some FABMs, variation of 7 or more days makes it hard or impossible to use the method
- Variable length menses of 7 or more days may need clinical investigation

SOURCE: Fraser IS et al. The FIGO Recommendations on Terminologies and Definitions for Normal and Abnormal Uterine Bleeding. Sem Reprod Med 2011; 29(5):383-90. Available at: <http://www.pharlic.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/3Fraser-Semin-Reprod-Med-2011.pdf>

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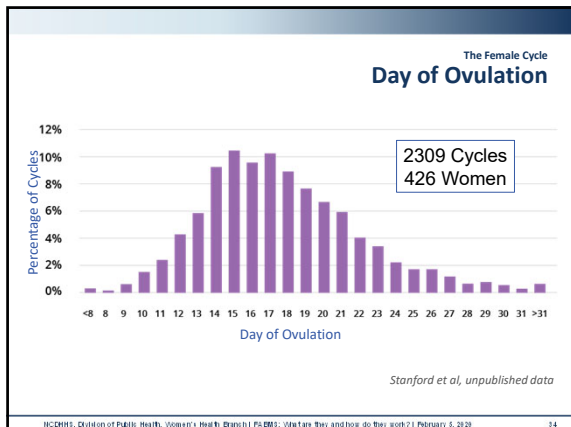
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What is the Typical Day of Ovulation?

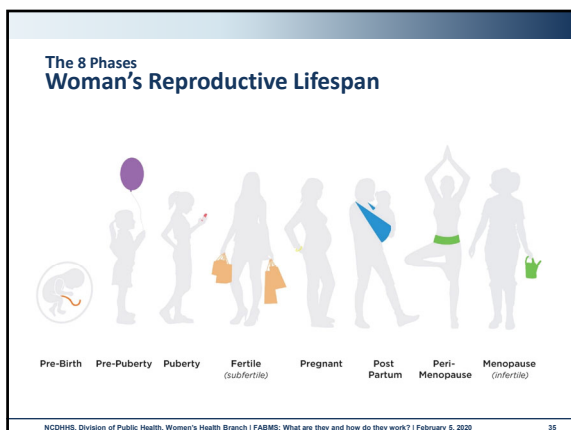
The Female Cycle

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“Typical use” and “perfect use” contraceptive effectiveness

- **Perfect use effectiveness:** reflects how effective a method *can be* in preventing pregnancy when used consistently and correctly according to instructions.
- **Typical use effectiveness:** reflects how effective a method is for the average person who does not always use methods correctly or consistently.
 - May vary widely by individual characteristics, especially for methods requiring substantial effort for adherence.

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As with all methods of pregnancy prevention, not every FABM is right for every person!

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Major Categories of FABMs with some examples

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Calendar Methods
Dynamic Optimal Timing (DOT)***

Perfect Use: 1%
Typical Use: 5%

Courtesy of Cycle technologies

Considerations

- For use only by women with 20-40 day cycles and less than 10 days of variation
- Proprietary algorithm on app predicts days of high fecundity based on previous cycle lengths
- Fertile window shortens over time
- No learning or teaching required
- Cost: free App

Advantages

- Requires tracking of only last menstrual period
- No ongoing cost
- Removes prediction responsibilities from user

Disadvantages

- Only works with regular cycles (20-40 days)
- Less useful for trying to conceive or health monitoring and management


***Disclaimer: Recent method not reviewed in the systematic review for quality though in my opinion meets at least moderate quality criteria

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Calendar Methods

Standard Days

Perfect Use: 4-6%
Typical Use: 11-14%



CycleBeads®

Considerations

- For use only by women with 26-32 day cycles
- Uses a 12-day fixed fertile window on CD 8-19 for all cycles
- Uses calendar, cycle beads, or **free app** to track cycles
- Method is self taught and easy to learn/teach (30 mins)
- Cost: approx. \$14 for beads; free App
- For more information visit www.Cyclebeads.com

Advantages

- Requires tracking of only last menstrual period
- No ongoing cost

Disadvantages


- Only works with regular cycles (26-32 days)**
- Less useful for trying to conceive or health monitoring and management

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Cervical Mucus Methods

Billings Ovulation Method

Perfect Use: 1-3%
Typical Use: 3-34%



Replly Ob/Gyn & Fertility

Considerations

- Helpful for long/irregular cycles
- Learning time: 3 hours over 3-5 sessions
- Teachers available online, in person and in a variety of languages
- Cost: Varies; **may be billable through insurance**
- For more information visit www.Boma-usa.org

Advantages

- Requires tracking of only cervical mucus sensations
- Can also be used for health monitoring/management
- Can be used by reading/visually impaired

Disadvantages


- Abstinence is recommended during first month of use

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Cervical Mucus Methods

Two Day Method

Perfect Use: 4-6%
Typical Use: 14%



Considerations

- Easy to learn and teach
- Smartphone app available
- Can be used with long/irregular cycles
- Cost: no cost to learn nor ongoing cost; **free app**
- For more information visit www.twodaymethod.com

Advantages

- No charting necessary
- Requires tracking of only cervical mucus sensations
- Can be started at any point in the cycle

Disadvantages

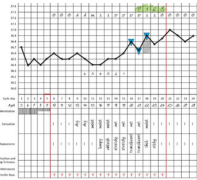
- May be difficult for women with constant cervical mucus
- Less useful for trying to conceive or health monitoring and management

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Symptothermal Methods

Sensiplan

Perfect Use: <1%
Typical Use: 2-3%



Considerations

- Cervical mucus is cross-checked with basal body temperature to identify fertile window
- In-person training by certified instructor
- Learning time: 4-6 hours over 4 sessions
- Cost: Varies; may be billable through insurance
- For more information visit www.replyobeyn.com/sensiplan

Advantages

- Can also be used for health monitoring and management
- No ongoing cost

Disadvantages


- Need literacy and basic math skills
- Potentially long fertile time for those with long cycles

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Basal Body Temperature

Natural Cycles

Perfect Use: 1.8%
Typical Use: 10%



Considerations

- Computer algorithm predicts daily chance of pregnancy based on woman's cycle history and daily basal body temperature
- FDA approved
- Learning time: none
- Cost: \$10/month or \$80/year
- For more information visit www.naturalcycles.com
- Can be used by all cycle lengths but may lead to long fertile window for those with long/irregular cycles

Advantages

- Removes prediction responsibilities from user

Disadvantages


- Ongoing cost of app use
- Potentially long fertile time while computer algorithm learns user patterns

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Symptohormonal Methods

Marquette

Perfect Use: <1.5%
Typical Use: 6-7%



Considerations

- Cervical mucus is cross-checked with urinary hormones to identify fertile window
- In-person or online training
- **App available**
- Learning time: Three 30 min sessions over 3-6 months
- Cost: Varies; **may be billable through insurance**
- For more information visit <https://www.marquette.edu/nursing/natural-family-planning-teacher.php>

Advantages

- Can also be used for health monitoring/management
- Multiple user options available
- **Perhaps a more objective view of fertile window?**

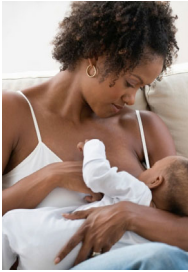
Disadvantages

- Ongoing cost of test strips
- May not detect urinary hormones of all women

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Lactational Amenorrhea Method
LAM

Perfect Use: <1%
Typical Use: 2%



Considerations

- A breastfeeding woman **MUST** meet the following three criteria:
 - ✓ Exclusively breastfeeding day and night
 - ✓ No return to menses since delivery
 - ✓ Baby is less than six months old
- Learning time: <60 minutes
- Cost: no cost for online information
- For more info visit www.waba.org.my/resources/lam

Advantages

- Can be used immediately after delivery
- No need to observe and track signs of fertility

Disadvantages

- Temporary
- Cannot be used for health monitoring/management

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Summary and Conclusions

- FABMs are a group of similar but distinct methods that work by allowing users to avoid unprotected intercourse on highly fertile days of the menstrual cycle by tracking changes in one or more biomarkers
- FABMs are used by a small but growing group of users who need accurate, transparent information
- FABMs work through biologically plausible mechanisms
- Some FABMs have undergone effectiveness testing in published studies; others have not
- Counseling tips, apps and case studies coming to another webinar soon!

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Questions?

Next FABM Webinar:
March 4, 2020 (12:30 – 1:30 pm)

How to Use FABMs in the Real World:
Counseling and Applications (Apps) Webinar

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The "live" educational activity evaluation will be open from February 05 until February 23, 2020. For participants viewing the "archived/ending" webinar, you must complete the evaluation within two weeks after viewing the archived recording.

The professional development certificate will be provided to all individuals that complete the evaluation by the deadline.

Please Note: This will be your only option to receive evidence of the professional development contact hours and/or CPH Recertification Credits. **You will need to save this certificate.**

To complete the evaluation, go to <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/0115A>

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