

Further information

Centacare Adelaide

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Country callers (toll free): 1800 114 010

Sexual Healthline

Open: 9 am – 1 pm, Monday – Friday
Tel: 1300 883 793
Country callers (toll free): 1800 188 171
Email: sexualhealthhotline@health.sa.gov.au

SHine SA contact details

East/West Primary Health Care Team

GP Plus Health Care Centre
64c Woodville Road, Woodville
Postal address: PO Box 76 Woodville SA 5011
Tel: 8300 5300
Clinic appointments: 8300 5301

Northern Primary Health Care Team

43 Peachey Road, Davoren Park
Postal address: PO Box 719 Davoren Park SA 5113
Tel: 8256 0700

Southern Primary Health Care Team

19–23 Beach Road, Christies Beach
Postal address: PO Box 330 Christies Beach SA 5165
Tel: 8186 8600

Workforce Development & Resources

64c Woodville Road, Woodville
Postal address: PO Box 76 Woodville SA 5011
Tel: 8300 5317
Email: SHineSACourses@health.sa.gov.au

Library & Resource Centre

64c Woodville Road, Woodville
Postal address: PO Box 76 Woodville SA 5011
Tel: 8300 5312
Email: SHineSALibrary@health.sa.gov.au

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Website

www.shinesa.org.au

National Relay Service: www.relayservice.com.au

133 677 (TTY/Voice) 1300 555 727 (Speak & Listen)

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Fertility awareness contraceptive methods



safety, pleasure, respect

What are fertility awareness methods?

These are methods where a woman becomes aware of the signs of fertility. She learns to detect when she is most likely to get pregnant.

This information can then be used to:

- increase the chance of conception by knowing when your fertile phase is
- reduce the risk of pregnancy by avoiding sexual intercourse when you are fertile

How does it work?

It works by learning to recognise the signs of when you are fertile (ovulation). The most useful signs of ovulation are regular monthly changes, such as cervical mucus and body temperature.

Many women will be familiar with the cervical mucus changes during a menstrual cycle. This mucus changes its appearance and texture at different times during the cycle. Mucus assists the sperm to travel and also influences their life span.

Another change is body temperature. A woman's body temperature varies during the cycle. After ovulation the temperature rises and remains at a slightly higher level until menstruation. This rise in temperature can confirm that ovulation has occurred.

Fertility awareness involves recognising these changes and recording them on a chart. This chart is then used to predict when you are fertile.

When can I use fertility awareness methods?

This approach relies mainly on the changes within your current cycle. Regular periods make these changes more predictable.

At times when your menstrual cycle is irregular it can be more difficult to predict your fertility. These times include at puberty, after childbirth, when breastfeeding, during the peri-menopause and after stopping hormonal contraception.

If you wish to have a baby, fertility awareness methods will also provide you with the personal fertility information you need to maximise your chances of conception.

How effective are these methods?

These methods require motivation, experience, commitment and cooperation by both partners to be effective for contraception or conception.

International studies have found that the effectiveness of these methods as contraception vary significantly. They are less effective than the hormonal methods (e.g. the Pill or implants).

It is important to be taught how to use these methods properly. Education sessions are conducted by Centacare Adelaide.

Lactational Amenorrhoea Method (LAM)

LAM is a fertility awareness method that is very effective. A woman is very likely to be infertile in the first 6 months after childbirth if the baby is fully breastfed and the woman has had no periods.

Advantages

- You understand your menstrual cycle better.
- If you wish to have a baby, you are aware of when you are most fertile which can maximise your chance of conception.
- There are no physical side effects because there are no medications or devices.
- These methods can be used where other contraception is not desired on personal grounds.

Disadvantages

- Requires motivation, experience, commitment and cooperation by both partners.
- Requires daily action in recognising the changes associated with the fertile phase of the cycle.
- Requires abstinence from sex if fertility awareness is the only contraception used.
- It takes time to learn the techniques.
- There are many other factors that can influence the interpretation of the various changes associated with fertility (e.g. stress, illness, medications, alcohol, sleeping habits). Lack of control or understanding of these influences can make these methods less reliable.

Fertility awareness methods do not protect against sexually transmitted infections. Condoms reduce the risk of STIs.