

Basal Body Temperature (BBT)

Knowledge of whether and when ovulation occurs is essential. Identifying the time when ovulation is likely to occur allows for proper planning of intercourse when fertility is optimal.

A simple method of estimating the time of ovulation is by charting daily oral temperatures. A woman's temperature is lower during the first part of the menstrual cycle than it is during the last 2 weeks. The temperature shift occurs near ovulation. Ovulation is assumed to occur when there is a rise of 0.4 to 0.6°F or more between 24-hour readings.

Instructions

- Use only a special "metabolic (basal)" thermometer with a Fahrenheit scale and learn to read it accurately.
- Shake down the thermometer before you go to bed and place it on your bedside table.
- Take your temperature each morning immediately after waking, *before* arising, eating, drinking, smoking, or undertaking any type of physical activity. Temperature should be taken for 5 minutes, by the clock. Record your temperature on your calendar.
- Also indicate, in the appropriate places, when intercourse and menstruation occur. Note any reasons for temperature variation, such as illness, infection, insomnia, etc. Mark any medication taken, such as aspirin, acetaminophen, antihistamine, antibiotic, Clomid, etc.
- Your BBT is an indirect predictor that cannot pinpoint the exact day of ovulation. Therefore, it is important to have sexual relations at the anticipated time of ovulation. Ideally, intercourse should take place at least every other day beginning 1 to 2 days prior to the anticipated day of ovulation and for a 2-3 day period following the upward shift in body temperature. This is your most fertile period.
- Ovulation predictor kits (OPK) can help estimate the date of ovulation.
- Start a new chart when menstrual bleeding begins again.

