

## Potential risks

No health risks.

## Potential side effects or disadvantages

Learning these methods takes time and practice. Using these methods consistently and correctly takes commitment, calculation, and planning. It is helpful to have cooperation between a woman and her partner.

FAB does not provide protection against HIV (AIDS) or sexually transmitted infections (STIs) such as chlamydia, gonorrhea, herpes, genital warts (HPV), hepatitis B or syphilis.

### How can you learn about FAB Methods?

Call your local family planning clinic for information and referrals. It is recommended that individuals interested in these methods should receive individualized instruction on the chosen FAB method.

Information about fertility-based methods is available on the internet (type words such as “fertility awareness” or “natural family planning” into any search engine — e.g., Google or Bing). and through smart phone “apps.” Fertility monitoring products can be found in drug stores or by visiting the website [www.birthcontrol.com](http://www.birthcontrol.com). You can also learn more about CycleBeads® and the SDM by visiting [www.cyclebeads.com](http://www.cyclebeads.com).



[www.cardeaservices.org](http://www.cardeaservices.org)

Revised 2014

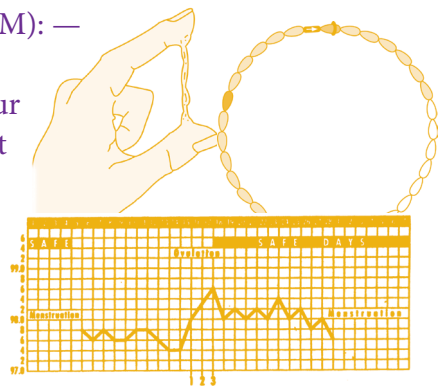
# Fertility Awareness-Based (FAB) Methods

## What are FAB Methods?

The Fertility Awareness-Based (FAB) Methods depend on identifying the “fertile time” each month—the days when intercourse would most likely result in pregnancy. Signs of fertility include both cervical fluid (secretions or vaginal discharge) and waking body temperature.

## There are several FAB Methods

- Standard Days Method (SDM) using CycleBeads® — based on statistical information about women who have regular menstrual cycles, and can be used by women who have cycles between 26 and 32 days long. Counting from the first day of your period, you consider days 8 through 19 in your cycle as fertile days.
- Calendar Rhythm Method (CRM): — count and record days in each menstrual cycle and predict your fertile days (when you could get pregnant).
- TwoDay Method — track cervical fluid for two days at a time.
- Billings Ovulation Method: — observe and chart your cervical fluid (secretions from the opening of the uterus).



(continued)

- Symptothermal Method — observe and record cervical fluid as well as changes in your basal body temperature (BBT).

To be successful with these methods, you should have basic knowledge about the physiology of fertility.

## How do you use FAB?

FAB methods can be used to plan a pregnancy or prevent a pregnancy. As you become more familiar with the signs of ovulation and the pattern of your menstrual cycle, you can plan sexual activity to avoid or plan a pregnancy.

During the fertile time, couples can use a barrier method (i.e., condoms), not have intercourse, or engage in sexual activity other than intercourse, to avoid pregnancy. Women (or couples) use a menstrual chart to record fertility signs (cervical fluid, BBT and first day of menses). With CycleBeads®, a woman moves a marker around a circle of beads, keeping track of her fertile days and cycle length.

A menstrual cycle is counted from the first day of bleeding in one month to the first day of bleeding the next month (usually 23-35 days). You must check and write down the specific signs of fertility every day of your menstrual cycle to learn when you are fertile.

## Basal Body Temperature (BBT)

BBT is your body temperature at rest (baseline). You take your temperature each morning before you get out of bed. Your BBT rises within 12 hours of your monthly ovulation. After your temperature has been higher for three continuous days (following 6 days of lower temperatures) you may assume your fertility period has ended for that cycle.

## Cervical mucus

Your cervical fluid (mucus or vaginal discharge) changes throughout each menstrual cycle. Right after your menstrual period you may have no fluid (“dry” days). As ovulation approaches, the fluid becomes sticky, creamy, and stretchy (like egg white). These fluid changes are related to fertility charting to plan or prevent a pregnancy.

## Effectiveness

The FAB methods are in the Tier 3 level of contraceptive effectiveness. Because there are various approaches to fertility awareness-based methods the effectiveness rates vary. Typically 24 out of 100 women who use FAB methods are likely to get pregnant in 1 year of use.

These methods can be highly effective if the instructions are followed carefully for each and every menstrual cycle. If instructions are not followed — consistently and correctly — the chance of pregnancy goes up. Fertility products are available to help you keep track of the changing fertility signs.

## Benefits of FAB

These methods have no health risks or side effects. They can increase your awareness and understanding of your body. They can be used as birth control, and then provide very helpful information for planning a pregnancy. Couples may develop greater communication, cooperation and responsibility using these methods. They are acceptable methods for some women and couples with religious concerns about other birth control.