

Signs of the Female Cycle

There are three signs, or biomarkers, that a woman can observe that indicate where she is in her cycle. These signs are cervical fluid, basal body temperature, and urinary hormones. Cervical fluid, or mucus secretions, are observed each time you go to the bathroom. Basal body temperature (or BBT) is taken at about the same time every morning. A woman can monitor her urinary hormones using various monitors or test strips. All three of these biomarkers change throughout a woman's cycle.

The Healthy Female Cycle

At the beginning of a woman's cycle she will notice that her basal body temperature will be lower, and she will note days of dryness. Then as estradiol levels begin to rise, she begins to observe fertile type cervical fluid. Estrogen acts on the cervix to produce cervical secretions or mucus that is thin and stretchy so sperm can survive and swim through into the uterus or womb. After ovulation, the dramatic rise in progesterone is reflected by the rise in basal body temperature and drying up of fertile cervical fluid. If a woman has not become pregnant, she sheds the lining of her uterus which we know as her period and the cycle begins again.

Cycle Tracking

Our cycles are highly attuned to what's going on in our lives—lack of sleep, sickness, physical or emotional stress can cause variation in our cycles month to month. All women can learn to read and respond to these changes in their bodies by tracking their hormonal fluctuations throughout their cycle. Single women, married women, women from all over the world can learn to read their bodies and track their cycles! Using the three biomarkers—cervical fluid, basal body temperature, and/or urinary hormones—women can track these signs every day of their cycle to help them identify when they may be fertile or just to monitor health.

When we learn to read the language of our body, we are best equipped to respond to the daily tasks and challenges of life. We can “sync” our lives to the rhythm of our cycles by building extra rest into our schedules and eating nourishing foods while we are menstruating, then taking on challenges as our estrogen is rising and we start to experience fertile type cervical fluid. Once progesterone takes over during the second half of our cycle, we experience a calmer energy that equips us to reflect and prepare for the start of the next cycle.

There are many benefits to tracking your cycle! Charting is empowering to women of all ages—whether or not they are sexually active—because through cycle tracking women can learn a lot about their bodies and develop a better understanding of their reproductive health. Cycle tracking is also a powerful tool to monitor overall health. Cycle charts can even be used as a diagnostic tool to address menstrual health concerns!

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Name: _____

FOUR PHASES OF THE MENSTRUAL CYCLE

	1. Menstruation	2. Follicular Phase	3. Ovulation	4. Luteal Phase
Day				
What role does it play?				
Dominant hormone(s)				
How do women typically feel?				

FOUR PHASES OF THE MENSTRUAL CYCLE KEY

	1. Menstruation	2. Follicular Phase	3. Ovulation	4. Luteal Phase
Day	1-5	1-13	14	15-28
What role does it play?	Time of bleeding when a woman sheds her endometrial lining (lining of uterus) as a result of no egg being fertilized and implanted in lining of uterus	Estrogen helps the endometrial lining to grow	Surge of the hormones LH and FSH trigger the release of an egg from the ovaries	Progesterone helps prepare the corpus luteum and endometrium for the implantation of a fertilized egg
Dominant hormone(s)	All hormones at low levels	Estrogen	Estrogen, LH, FSH	Progesterone, estrogen
How do women typically feel?	Less energy than usual Reserved Introspective Time of release and reset Might experience cramps, headache, bloating	Energy begins to increase Focused thinking and creativity increases Greater interest in being social	Our thoughts, feelings, and emotions tied to the follicular phase reach their peak	Energy levels begin to wane May experience mood fluctuations or other PMS symptoms toward the end of luteal phase

CHART YOUR CYCLE

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