

Predictable Pattern to the Menstrual Cycle: Basal Body Temperature

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Abstract

Basal body temperature (BBT) is the lowest body temperature in a 24-hour period. It is a predictable pattern to the menstrual cycle that will allow the women to estimate when they ovulate. Basal body temperature can be used as a way to predict fertility or as a part of a method of contraception, by helping the best days to have or avoid unprotected sex.

Keywords: Basal Body Temperature (BBT); Menstrual Cycle.

Basal Body Temperature

Definition

Basal body temperature (BBT) is the lowest body temperature in a 24-hour period. Women need to measure it every day for a few months to see if there's a predictable pattern to the menstrual cycle that will allow the women to estimate when they ovulate.

Why It's Done

Basal body temperature can be used as a way to predict fertility or as a part of a method of contraception, by helping the best days to have or avoid unprotected sex. Tracking the basal body temperature for either fertility or contraception is inexpensive and doesn't have any side effects for the woman.. Some women may choose to use the basal body temperature method for religious reasons.

The basal body temperature method can also be used to detect pregnancy. Following ovulation, a rise in basal body temperature that lasts for 18 or more days may be an early indicator of pregnancy.

The basal body temperature method is often combined with another method of natural family planning, such as the cervical mucus method. This combination is sometimes referred to as the sympto thermal method.

Risks

Using the basal body temperature method to promote fertility doesn't pose any risks. Likewise, using the basal body temperature method for birth control doesn't pose any direct risks, but it doesn't offer protection from sexually transmitted infections and it's one of the least effective natural family planning methods. As many as 24 out of 100 women who use fertility awareness-based methods to prevent

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pregnancy such as the basal body temperature method for one year will get pregnant.

Using the basal body temperature along with another fertility awareness-based method for birth control requires motivation and diligence. If the woman doesn't want to conceive, the couple must avoid having sex or use a barrier method of contraception during the fertile days each month.

The basal body temperature can be influenced by many factors, including:

- Illness or fever
- Stress
- Shift work
- Interrupted sleep cycles or oversleeping
- Alcohol
- Travel and time zone differences
- Gynecologic disorders
- Certain medications
- Some women also ovulate without a clear rise in basal body temperature.

How to Monitor BBT

To get an accurate reading, need to use a basal thermometer, which is sensitive enough to measure minute changes in body temperature. (Some experts think glass BBT thermometers are more accurate than digital ones.)

Take the temperature when women first wake up in the morning - before they eat, drink, have sex, or even sit up in bed or put a foot on the floor - and record it on a BBT chart. Try to take a reading at about the same time each morning. If the women don't take the temperature immediately after waking up, the BBT chart will not be accurate. (The same is true if the women get a fever.)

We can print our blank BBT chart, along with step-

by-step instructions for using it and a completed sample chart.

Before ovulation, BBT may range from about 97.2 to 97.7 degrees Fahrenheit. But the day after the women ovulate, should see an uptick of 0.5 to 1.0 degree in BBT, which should last until the next period. (may notice the temperature occasionally spiking on other days, but if it doesn't stay up, probably haven't ovulated yet.) If the women become pregnant, the temperature will stay elevated throughout the pregnancy.

After charting the BBT for a few months, the women will be able to see whether there's a pattern to the cycle. If there is, the women may be able to estimate when the women will next ovulate. (Charting the BBT can also help the healthcare provider pinpoint the cause of fertility problems.)

Conclusion

To get pregnant, the women can use the basal body temperature method to determine the best days to have sex. Similarly, if the women hoping to avoid pregnancy, she can use the basal body temperature method to help determine which days to avoid unprotected sex. Because the basal body temperature method alone doesn't provide enough warning time to effectively prevent pregnancy, it's generally used in combination with other fertility awareness-based methods such as Cervical mucus

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