

# An Introduction to the Science, Methods, and Practice of NFP Natural Family Planning

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# What do you think of when you hear the term Natural Family Planning?





What do you hope  
for in your  
marriage?





# Objectives of Presentation

- Define Natural Family Planning (NFP)
- Describe how NFP works
- Discuss effectiveness of NFP methods
- Summarize the benefits of using NFP



# Definition of NFP

- Methods of **monitoring and interpreting natural biological markers** of fertility
- To help determine the **fertile and infertile times** of a woman's menstrual cycle
- Information can be used **to achieve or avoid** pregnancy



*NFP also means ...*

- **Abstaining from intercourse** and genital activity during fertile time of cycle if avoiding pregnancy
- **Not using contraception** to interfere with fertility
- **Developing non-genital ways** of expressing intimacy during the fertile times
- Being **Open to Life**



# METHODS OF NFP

- **Calendar Rhythm**
- **Basal Body Temperature (BBT)**
- **Cervical Mucus (or Ovulation Method)**
- **Sympto-Thermal Method (STM)**
- **Hormonal Monitoring**





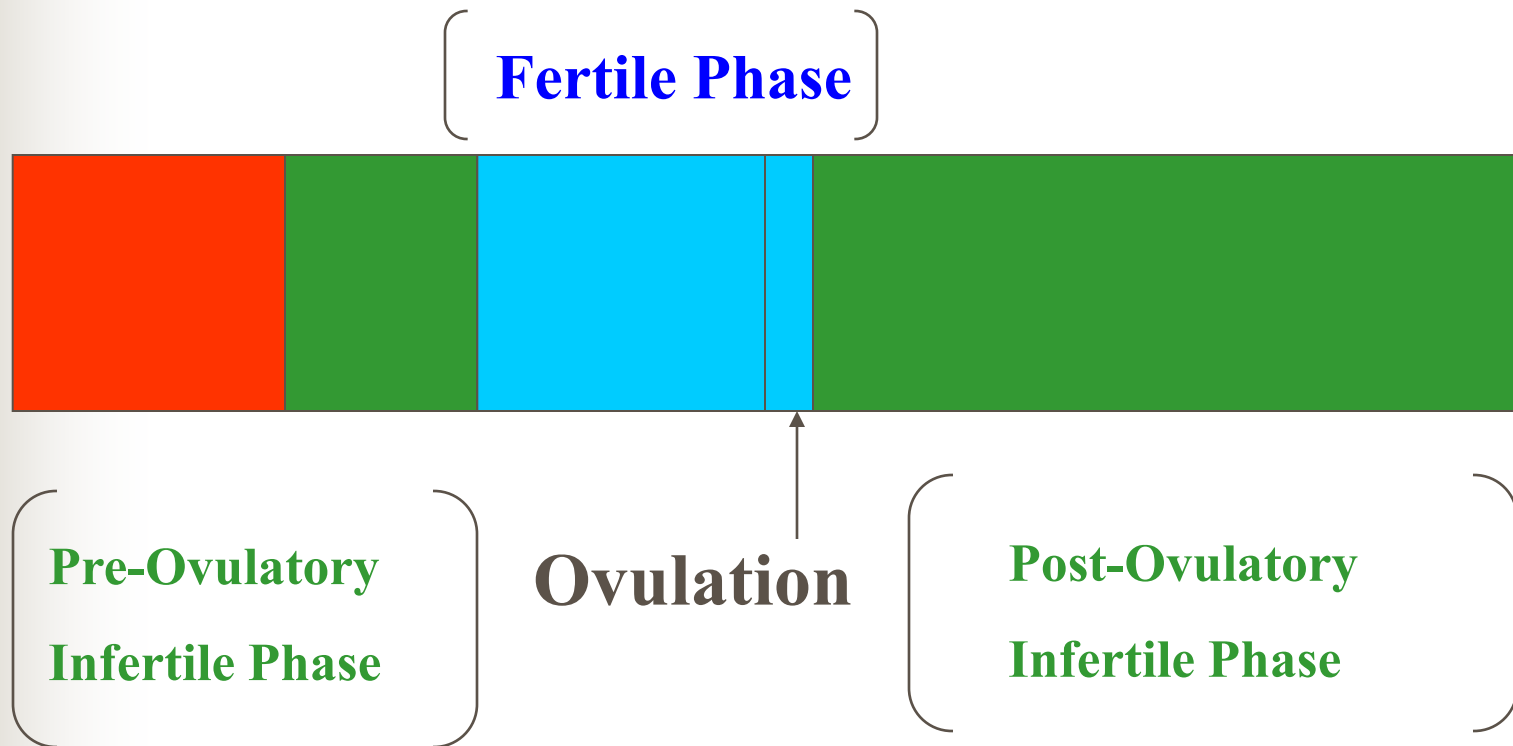
**So – How Does NFP Work?**



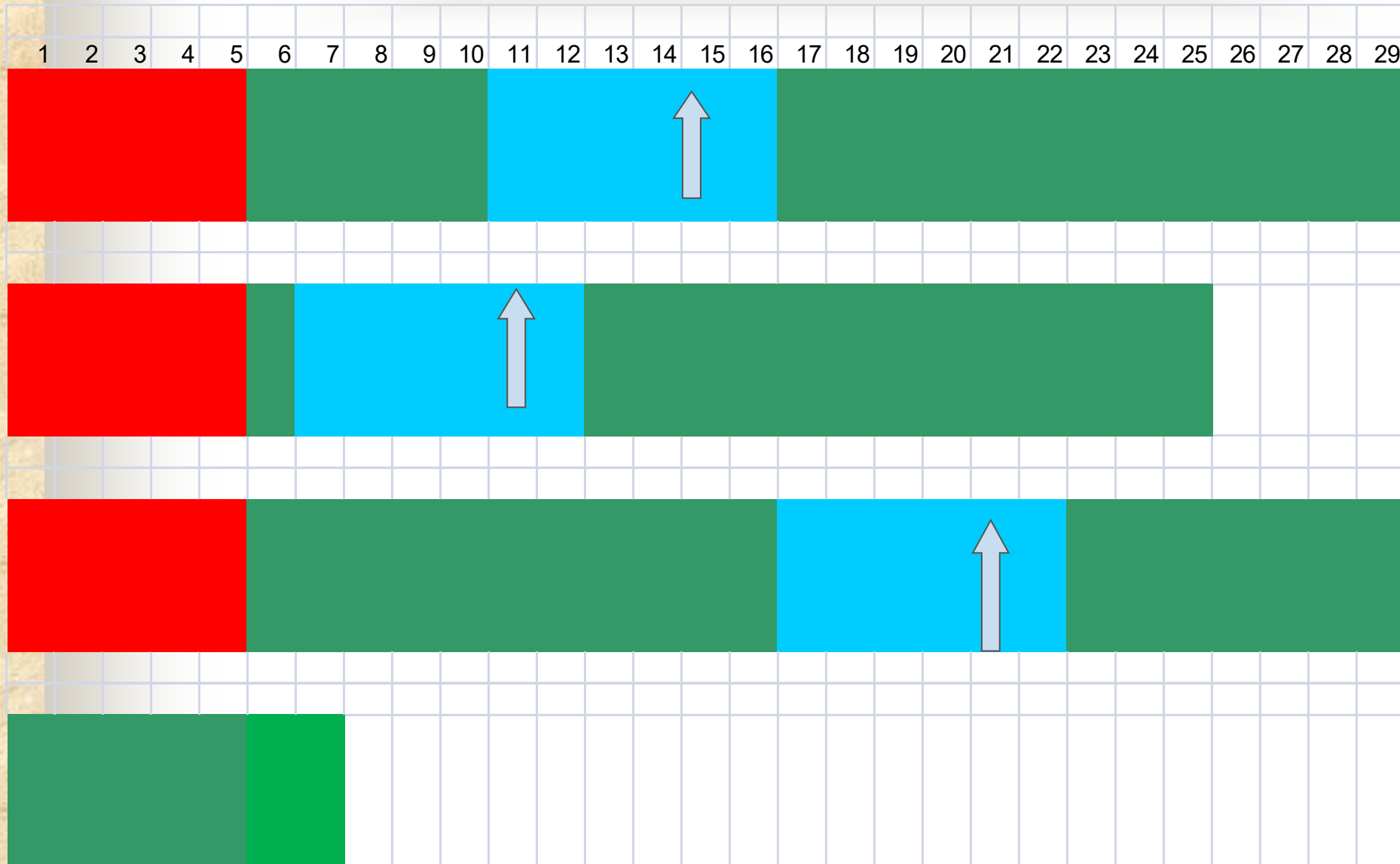
# Six Day Fertile Window

- **A man and woman together are fertile for only 6 days.**
- **The day of ovulation when a egg is released.**
- **And the 5 days before ovulation!**

# Phases of the Menstrual Cycle

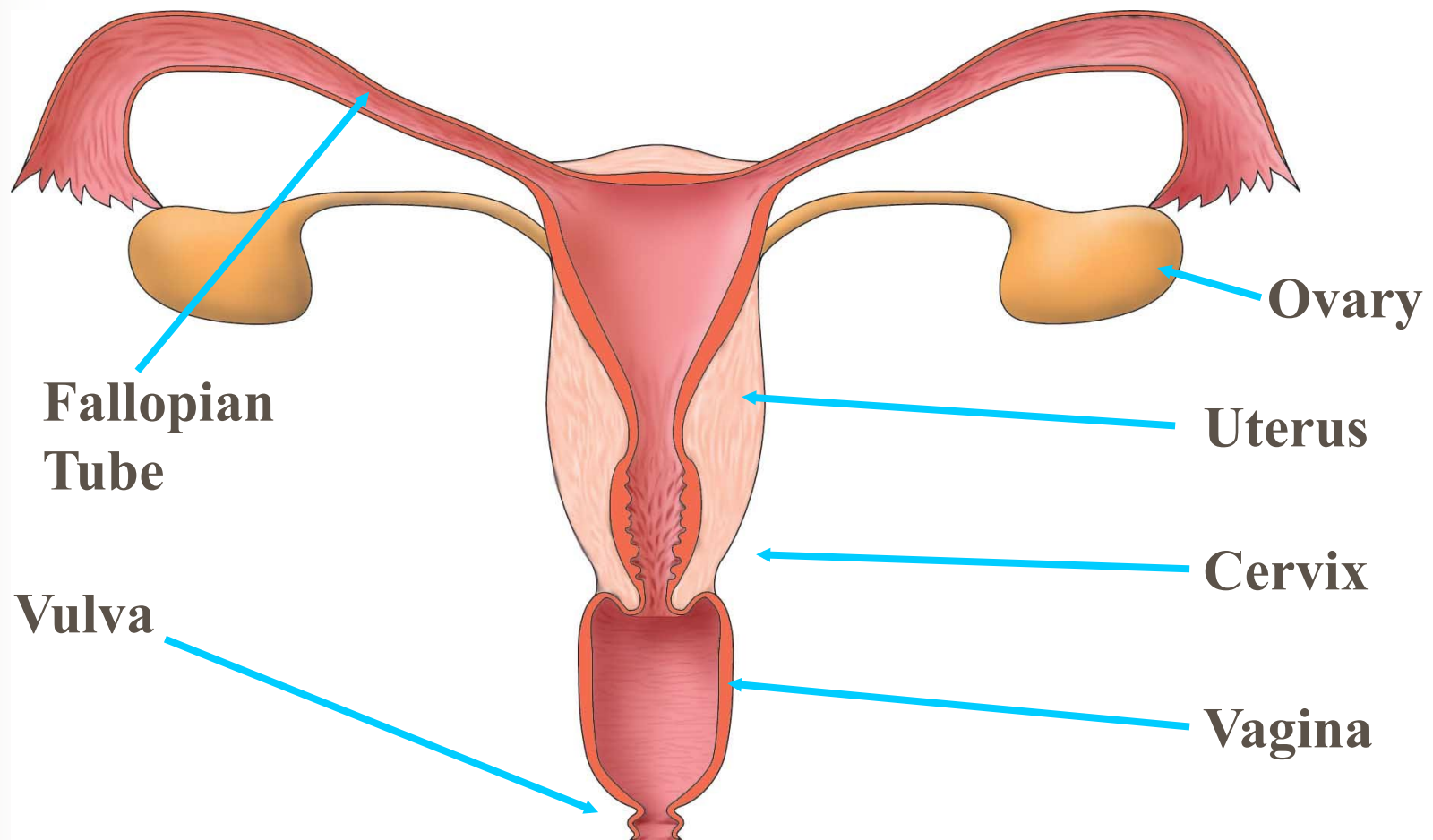


# Variability of the Cycle

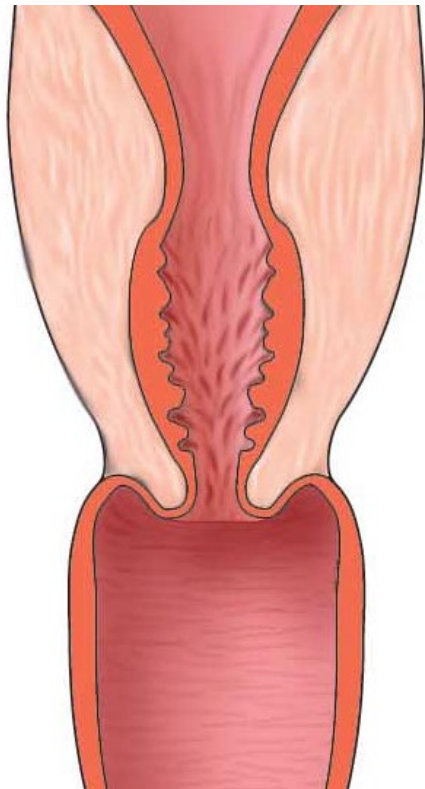




# Female Anatomy: Front View



# Female Cervix:

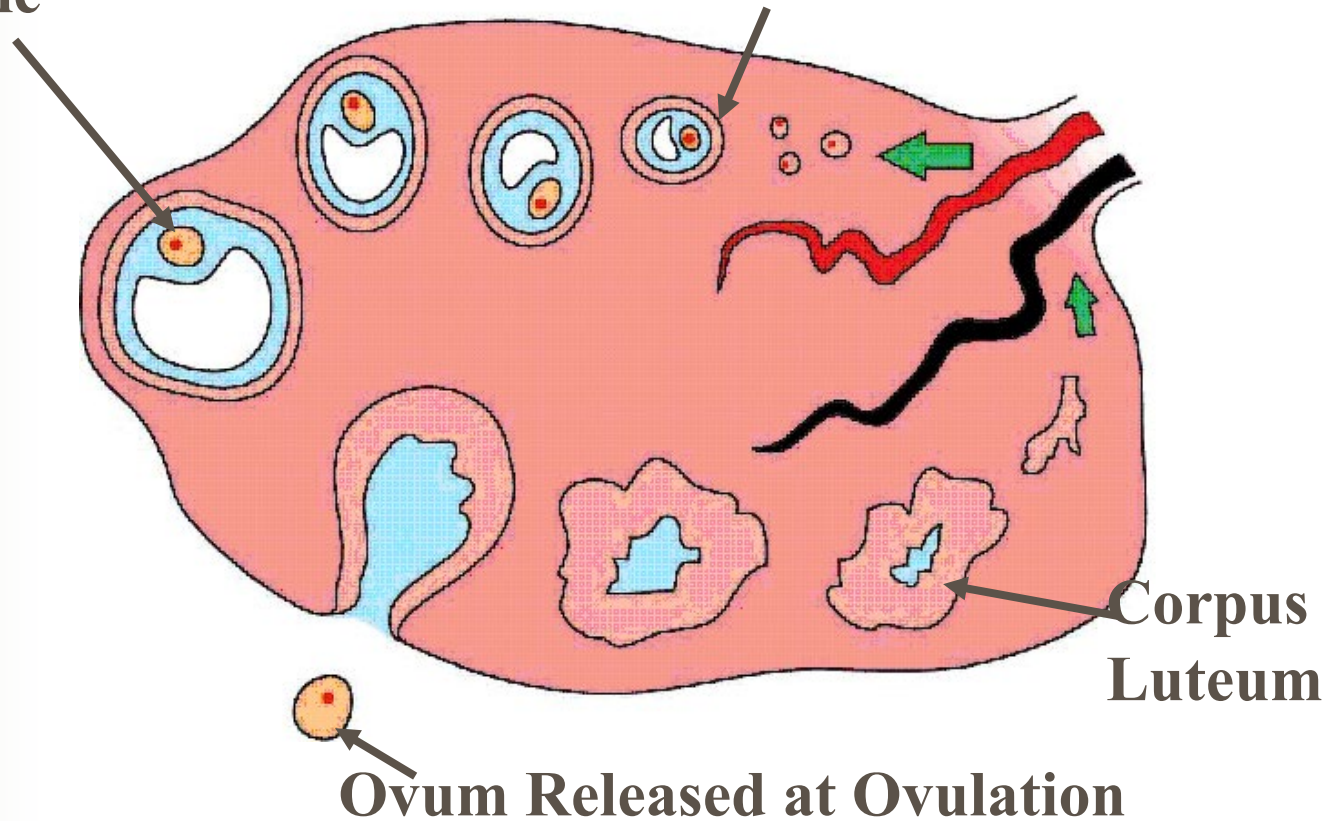


- Produces thin watery fertile mucus when stimulated by estrogen
- Sperm live in good mucus 3-5 days
- Produces thick mucus plug when stimulated by progesterone

# Female Ovary

Ovum (Egg) In Ripe Follicle

Developing Follicle





# NFP measures ...

**Estrogen** - secreted by the ovary's follicle

- Stimulates cervical mucus production

**LH** - secreted by the pituitary

- Stimulates ovulation

**Progesterone** - secreted by the corpus luteum

- Raises basal body temperature
- Dries cervical mucus





# Natural Biological Signs of Fertility

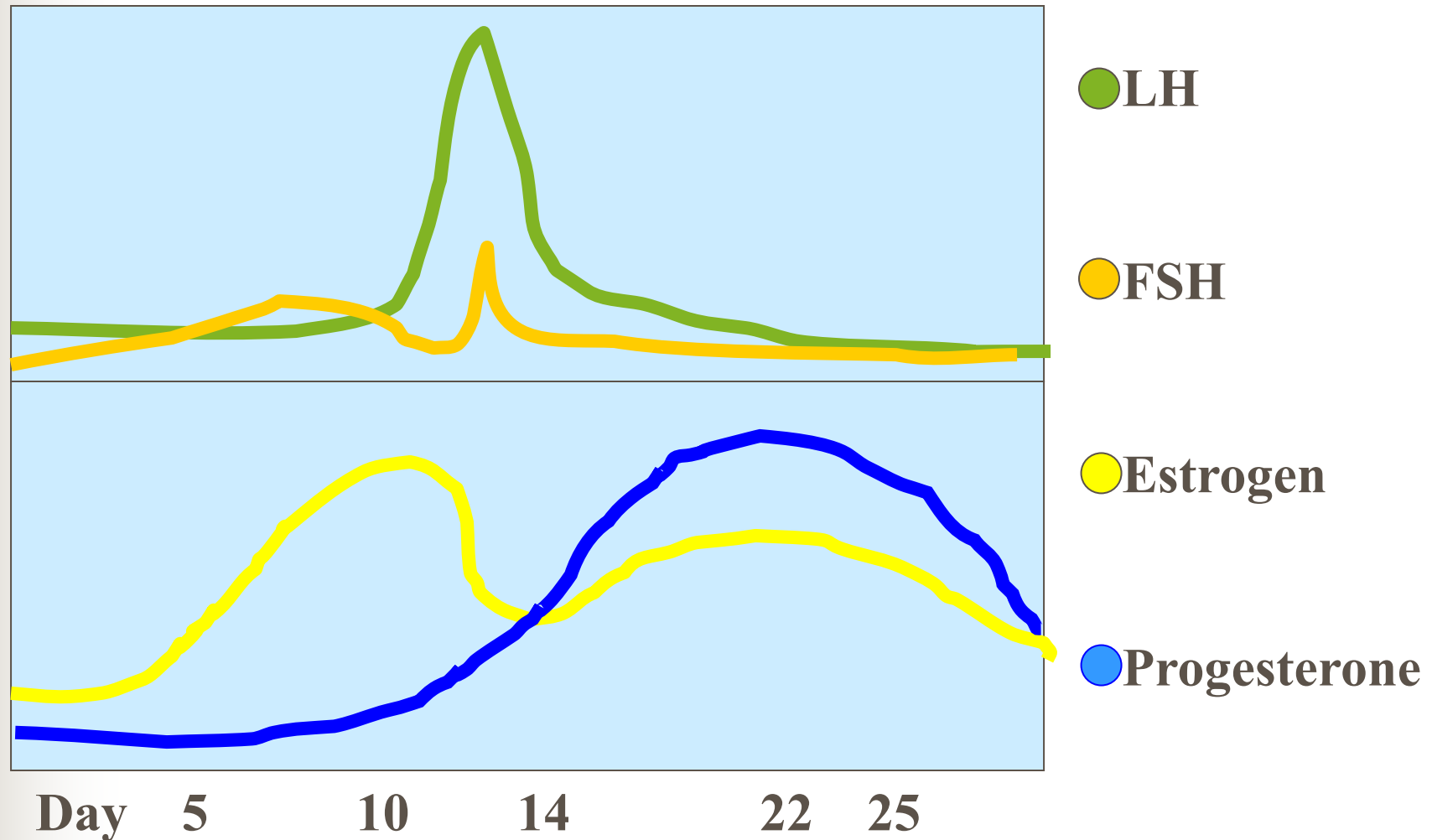
- Changes in **Resting Body Temp**
- Changes in **Cervical Mucus**
- Changes in **Female Hormones**


*Note: some still use a **Formula***

# Female Menstrual Cycle

Hormone Levels

28 Day Cycle





# The Beginning of Fertile Phase

- Presence of cervical mucus
- Rising levels of the hormone estrogen
- Shortest cycle minus 20 days; or day “8”



# Markers of Peak Fertility

- Cervical mucus – clear, stretchy, slippery
- Rise in basal body temperature
- LH hormone peaks





# The End of the Fertile Phase

- Peak in cervical mucus plus count of 3
- Rise in temperature plus count of 3
- Peak in LH plus count of 3
- Longest cycle minus 10 days; or day “19”

# Cervical Mucus Cycle

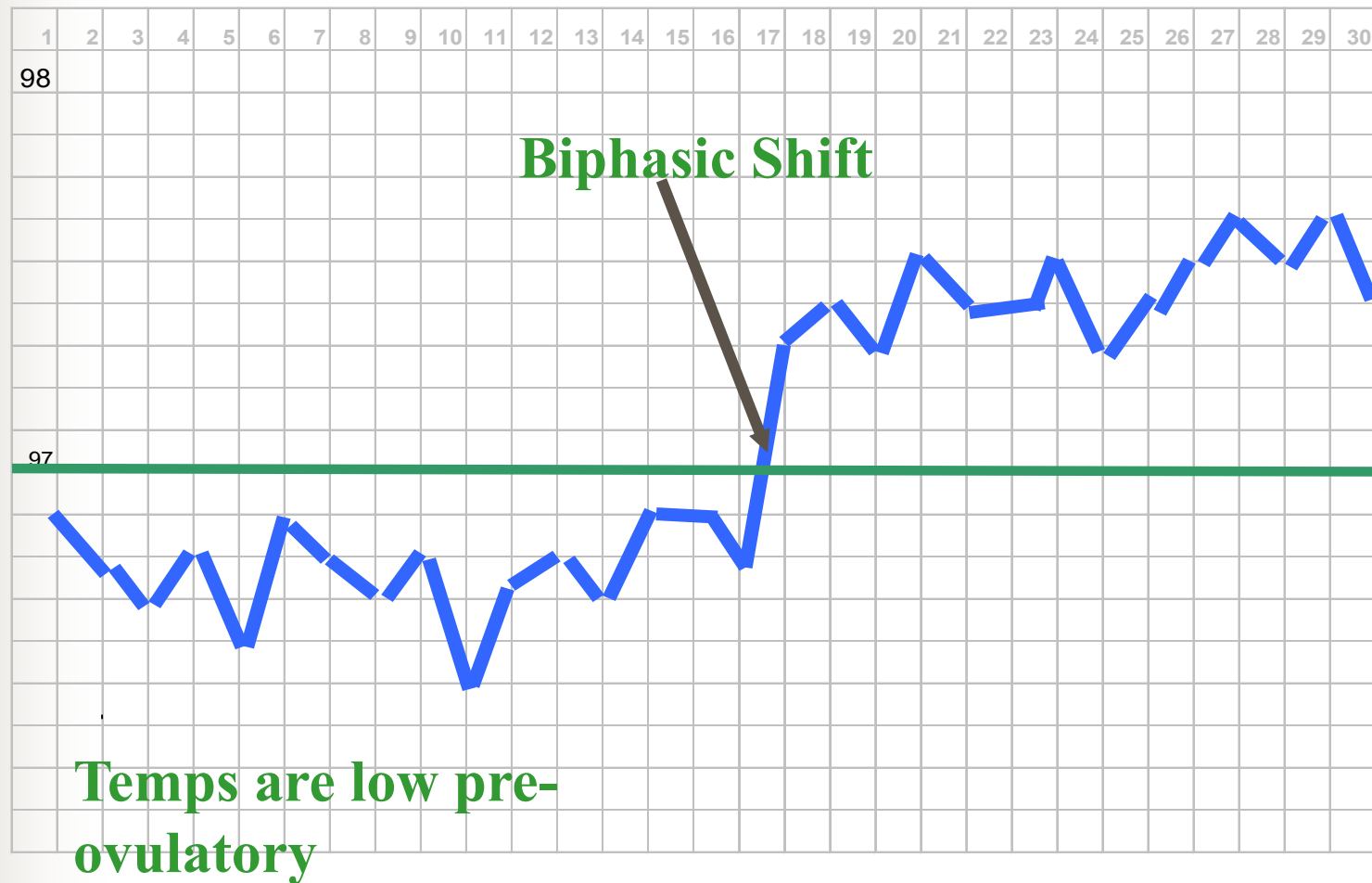


**Beginning**

**Peak  
Fertility**

**End**

# The BBT Chart



# Clearblue Fertility Monitor



- Low Fertility
- High Fertility
- Peak Fertility





# Basic Instructions for Achieving and Avoiding Pregnancy

- **Achieve** - Have intercourse during the fertile window!
- **Avoid** – Don't have intercourse during the fertile window!

# NFP Efficacy Studies





# Terms

- The **perfect or correct use** unintended pregnancy rate refers to those pregnancies that occur when the method is used consistently and according to instructions.
- The **typical use (or total)** pregnancy rate includes the combination of unintended pregnancies when the methods are followed correctly and the unintended pregnancies that occur when users of the method do not always follow the instructions of the method correctly.



# Effectiveness of NFP\*

## Single Index Methods


- Perfect Use - 97%
- Typical Use - 84%

## Multiple Indexed Methods

- Perfect Use - 98%
- Typical Use - 90%

•Kambic, R. "The Effectiveness of Natural Family Planning." *Current Medical Research* 11 (Winter/Spring, 2000). Based on meta-analysis of 23 ovulation methods studies and 15 STM studies.

\*Effectiveness rates are calculated on 100 women over 12 months of use.



## Classic and Recent NFP Efficacy Studies: Correct Use and Typical Efficacy Rates\* per 100 Women Over 12 Months of Use

Study/Year	Indicators	Length**	Correct	Total
WHO (1981)	Mucus	(25-32)	97	78
Indian Medical (1996)	Mucus	(21-36)	99	90
Howard, et al.(1999)	Mucus	(25-32)	100	86
Arevalo, et al.(2002)	Fixed Calendar	(26-32)	95	88
Arevalo, et al. (2004)	Mucus	(13-42)	96	86
Frank-Hermann, et.al.(2007)	Mucus & Temp	(25-35)	99	92
Fehring, et al.(2007)	Mucus/EHFM***	(21-42)	98	87

\* Rate = percentage of women per 100 that did not have an unintended pregnancy.

\*\* Range of length of menstrual cycles in study.

\*\*\* EHFM = electric hormonal fertility monitoring





# Pregnancy rate over one year by family planning method

	Correct Use	Typical Use
• CHANCE	85	85
• SPERMICIDES	18	29
• WITHDRAWAL	4	27
• CONDOMS	2	15
• <b>SDM</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>12</b>
• <b>OVULATION METHOD</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>16</b>
• <b>SYMPTOTHERMAL</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>11</b>
• PILL	0.3	8
• IUD	0.1	0.6

\* Table adapted from: Trussell J. "Contraceptive failure in the United States." *Contraception*. 2004;70:89-96.



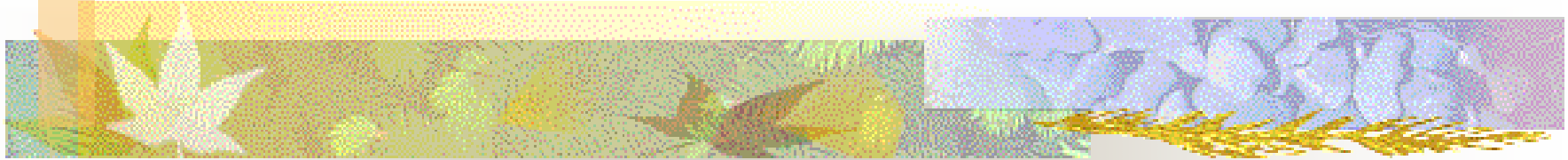
# Effectiveness of NFP

- Accurate charting
- Accurate observations
- Consistent use
- Mutual motivation
- Loving cooperation

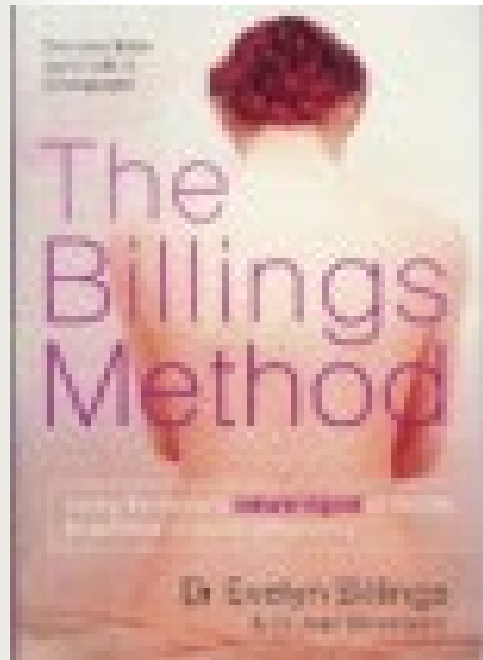
**NFP is close to 98% effective!**



# Methods of NFP



# Billings Ovulation Method



- Cervical Mucus
- Perfect Use = 99 - 100%
- Typical Use = 89 - 99%

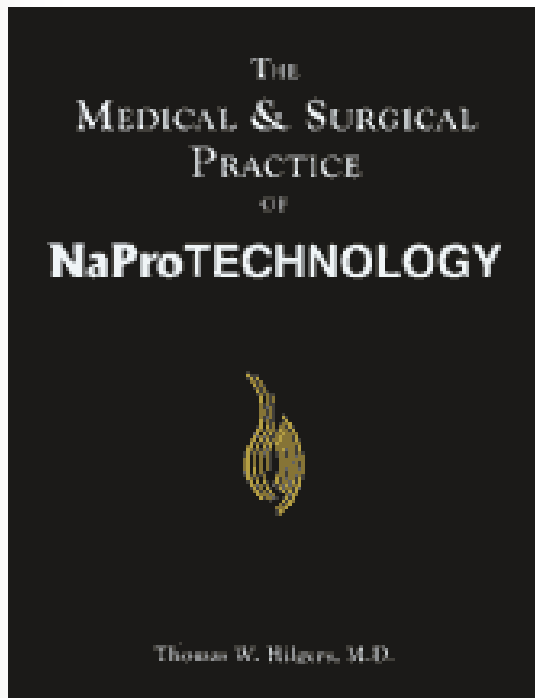
## Representative Studies of the BOM

S. Thapa, M. V. Wonga, P. G. Lampe, H. Pitojo, A. Soejoenoes. "Efficacy of three variations of periodic abstinence for family planning in Indonesia." *Studies in Family Planning*, 21: 327-34, 1990.

J. X. Xu, J. H. Yan, D. Z. Fan, D. W. Zhang. "Billings natural family planning in Shanghai, China." *Advances in Contraception*, 10: 195-204, 1994.

Indian Council of Medical Research Task Force on NFP. "Field Trial of the Billings Ovulation Method of a Natural Family Planning." *Contraception* 53: 69-74, 1996.

# Creighton Model System (CrM)



- Standardized form of the Ovulation Method
- Basis for what is called NaProTechnology
- Correct Use = 99.9
- Typical Use = 96.8

Hilgers T. W. and Stanford J. B. "Creighton Model NaProEducation Technology for Avoiding Pregnancy: Use Effectiveness." *Journal of Reproductive Medicine* 43: 495-502, June, 1998.



# Sympto-Thermal Methods (STM)

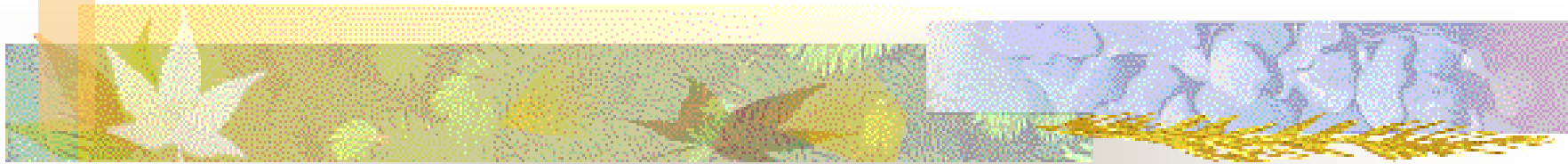


- Combines indicators of fertility
- Common indicators are BBT, cervical mucus, and calendar formulas
- Provided by Couple to Couple League and Northwest Family Systems
- Correct Use = 99%
- Typical Use = 85 – 94%

Rice, F. J. & Lancot, C. A. "Results of a Recent Study of the Sympto-Thermal Method of Natural Family Planning." *Linacre Quarterly* 45:4 (November, 1978): 388-391.



# Recent Method Innovations



# Standard Days Method (SDM)



- Days 8 – 19 fertile
- Cycle length 26 – 32
- Correct Use = 95%
- Typical Use = 88%

Arevalo M., Jennings V., Sinai I. “**Efficacy of a new method of family planning the Standard Days Method.**” *Contraception* 2002;65:333-338.

# Efficacy of the TwoDay Method



- Did I note any secretions today?
- Did I note any secretions yesterday?
- Correct use = 96.5%
- Typical = 86.3%

# European Double Check



- Use of two indicators of fertility
- Temperature & Cervical Secretions
- Correct Use = 99.4%
- Typical Use = 98.2%

Frank-Herrmann, P. et al. "The effectiveness of a fertility awareness based method to avoid pregnancy in relation to a couple's sexual behaviour during the fertile time: a prospective longitudinal study." *Human Reproduction* 22 (2007): 1310-1319.



# Sympto-Hormonal Method

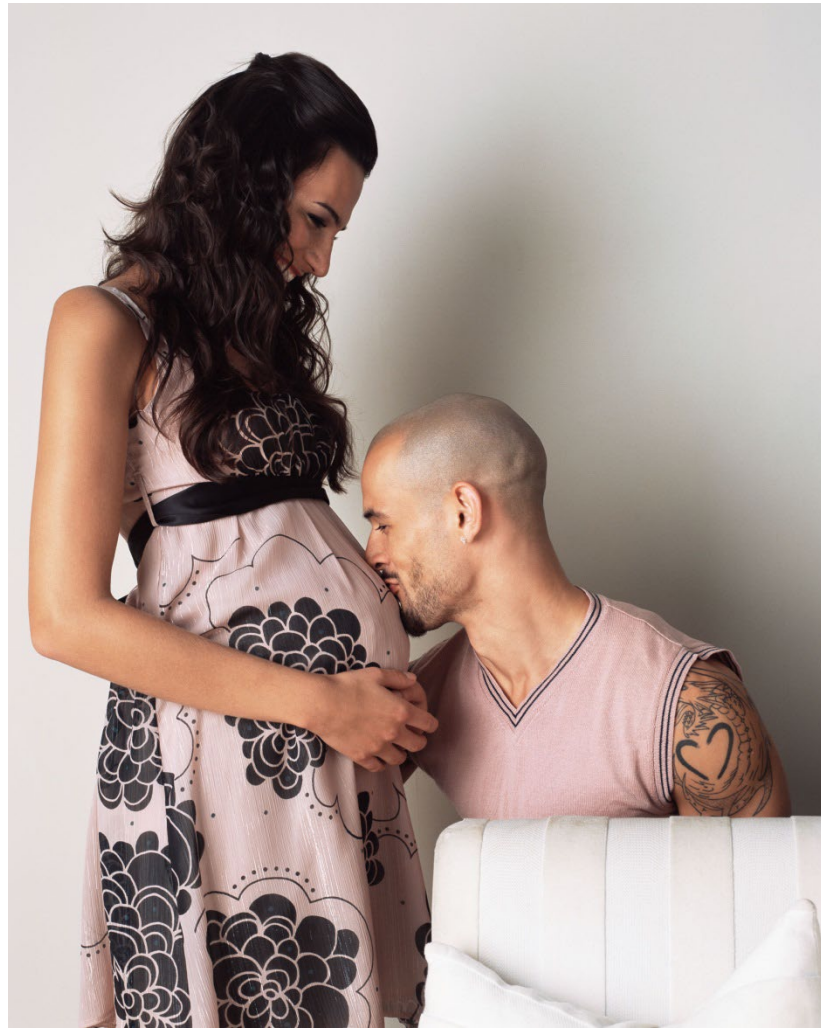


- CPEFM plus
- Cervical mucus
- Correct use = 98-99%
- Typical use = 87-90%

Fehring R. J., Schneider M., Raviele K. "Efficacy of cervical mucus observations plus electronic hormonal fertility monitoring as a method of natural family planning." *Journal of Obstetric and Gynecological Neonatal Nursing* 36 (2007): 152–160.

Fehring R. J., Schneider M., Barron M. L. "Efficacy of the Marquette method of natural family planning." *The American Journal of Maternal/Child Nursing* 33 (2008): 348–354.

# Living With Your Fertility





## *Benefits of using NFP . . .*

- No harmful side effects
- Supports reproductive health
- Environmentally friendly
- Virtually cost free
- Are adaptable—to achieve or avoid pregnancy
- Requires couple communication
- A “shared” responsibility
- Encourages sexual maturity
- Respects God’s design for married love!



# NFP Respects God's Design

“To experience the gift of married love while respecting the laws of conception is to acknowledge that one is not the master of the sources of life but rather the minister of the design established by the Creator.”

*(Humanae vitae, #13)*

*Therefore,*

Spouses “should never act to suppress or curtail the life-giving power given by God that is an integral part of what they pledged to each other in their marriage vows.”

*(Married Love and the Gift of Life, 2006)*



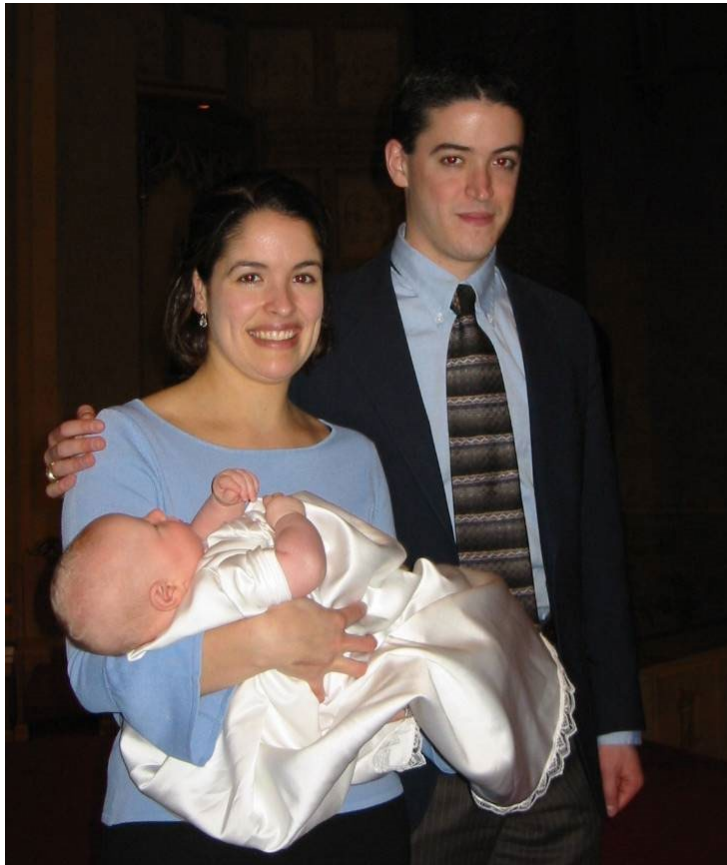
# Fertility is Sacred

- **Stewards of the gift of life**
- **Cooperators with God's love**





# Natural Family Planning



**“NFP strengthens  
conjugal love and  
helps to establish  
families in peace  
and security.”**

*Drs. John and Evelyn Billings*



# NFP Provider Web Sites ...

- **Billings Ovulation Method Association – USA (BOMA)**  
<http://www.boma-usa.org/>
- **Couple to Couple League International (CCL)**  
<http://www.ccli.org/teach/index.shtmlh>
- **Family of the Americas Foundation (FAF)**  
<http://www.familyplanning.net/index-aboutus.html>
- **Marquette University College of Nursing**  
<http://www.mu.edu/nursing/nfp/training.html>
- **Northwest Family Services**  
<http://www.nwfs.org/index.t?goto=nfp>
- **The Pope Paul VI Reproductive Institute**  
<http://www.mitec.net/~popepaul/Education1.htm>