

CHAPTER VIII: CALENDAR-BASED METHODS

WHAT ARE CALENDAR-BASED METHODS?

Calendar-based methods are FAB methods that use calendar calculations to determine the period when becoming pregnant is unlikely.

All women can use calendar-based methods. Although no medical conditions prevent the use of these methods, some conditions make them difficult to use.

Table 19. MEC for calendar-based methods

- **Accept** means that the FAB methods can be used without restriction. This approach applies in the following:
 - Women with vaginal discharge
 - Women with diseases that elevate body temperature, both acute and chronic diseases
- **Caution** means that additional or special counseling may be needed to ensure correct use of the method. This approach applies in the following situations:
 - Menstrual irregularities among young women in their first several years after menarche and in older women approaching menopause may make the identification of the fertile period difficult.
- **Delay** means that use of a particular fertility awareness-based method should be delayed until the condition is evaluated or corrected. Give the client another method to use until she can start the calendar-based method. This approach applies in the following situations:
 - Recently gave birth or is breastfeeding. This method can only be recommended if the client has had at least three menstrual cycles and if her cycles are regular again.
 - Recently had an abortion or miscarriage. Delay the use of the method until the start of the client's next monthly bleeding.
 - Irregular vaginal bleeding.
- **Delay or use with caution** in the following situations that may affect signs of fertility or delay ovulation:
 - Taking any mood-altering drugs such as anti-anxiety therapies (except benzodiazepines) and antidepressants (selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors, tricyclic, or tetracyclic)
 - Long-term use of certain antibiotics
 - Long-term use of any nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (such as aspirin and ibuprofen) or paracetamol

Standard Days Method

WHAT IS THE STANDARD DAYS METHOD?

The SDM is based on the physiology of the menstrual cycle and the functional life span of the ovum and the sperm. It can be used by women if their menstrual cycles are 26 to 32 days long. The client uses color-coded CycleBeads to mark the fertile and infertile days of her menstrual cycle and to monitor her cycle length. Clients using this method abstain from sexual intercourse on fertile days (days 8 to 19) to avoid pregnancy.



HOW EFFECTIVE IS THE SDM?

About 5 per 100 women who consistently and correctly use the method and abstain on fertile days become pregnant over the first year of use.

WHO CAN USE THE SDM?

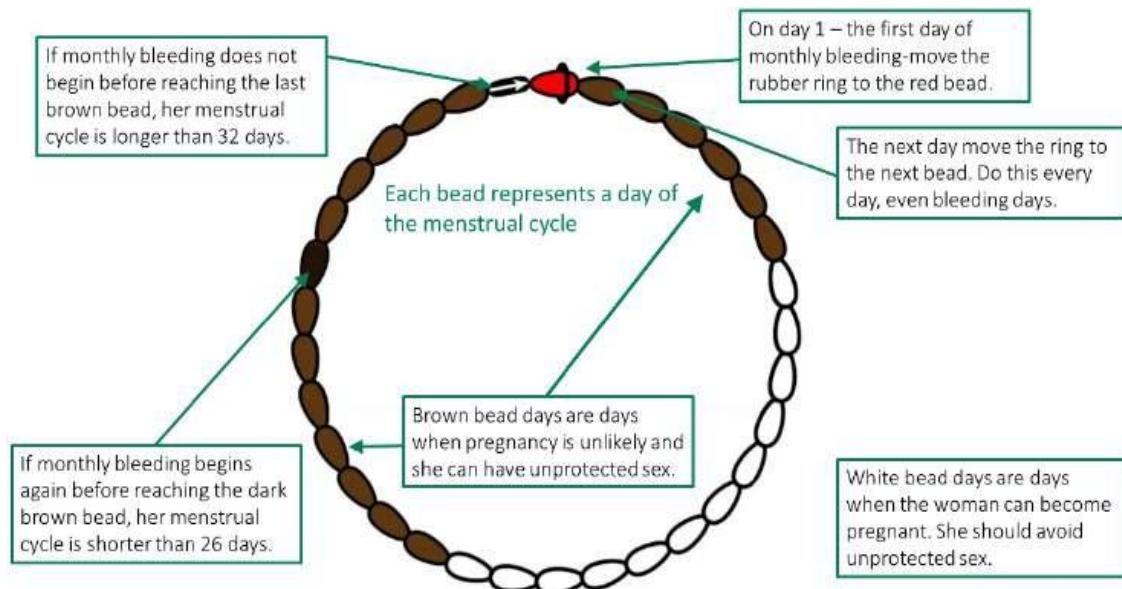
The SDM works well for women who usually have menstrual cycles that are 26 to 32 days long.

WHO CANNOT USE THE SDM?

Women with cycles that are NOT 26 to 32 days long cannot use the method.

HOW AND WHEN IS THE SDM USED?

- The client keeps track of the days of her menstrual cycle and counts the first day of her monthly bleeding as day 1.
- Using the CycleBeads, the client moves the ring to the red bead to begin a new cycle and marks that day on her calendar. She moves the rubber ring one bead every day.
- Days 8 to 19 of every cycle (when the ring is on the white beads) are considered fertile days for all SDM users.
- The couple avoids vaginal sex (or uses condoms, spermicides, or withdrawal) during days 8 to 19.
- The couple can have unprotected sex on all the other days of the cycle (when the ring is on the brown beads)—days 1 to 7 at the beginning of the cycle and from day 20 until her next monthly bleeding begins.





Source: Georgetown University Medical Center

iCycleBeads™ is a smartphone app that allows a woman to use the SDM through her Android or iOS device. The application asks for the woman's first day of the period and creates a calendar or a virtual representation of the CycleBeads. With a click of a button, this period tracking tool shows the user where she is in her cycle and whether she is on a day when pregnancy is likely or not.

WHAT ARE THE SIDE EFFECTS OF THE SDM?

The SDM has no known side effects.

HOW ARE PROBLEMS RELATED TO SDM USE MANAGED?

If the client has two or more cycles outside the 26–32 day range within any 12 months, suggest the use of the symptoms-based method.