

Birth Control: Natural Family Planning



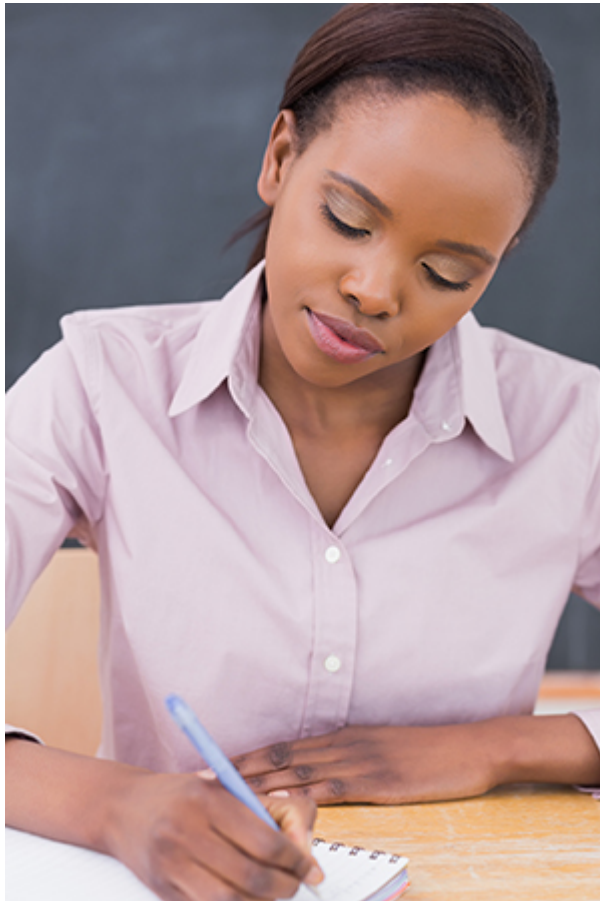
Natural family planning (NFP) is based on a woman's awareness of when she is likely to become pregnant (fertile). By learning how to tell when you're fertile, you can know when to not have sex. This can help prevent pregnancy. To learn NFP, it's advised that you take a class or work with a qualified teacher.

Pregnancy rates

Talk to your healthcare provider about how well this birth control method works.

Using NFP

A woman is fertile only during a certain part of her monthly cycle—just before and during ovulation. By learning when you ovulate, you can know when you're likely to be fertile. You estimate when you're ovulating by observing and keeping track of certain physical signs. You can then not have sex or use a barrier method during that fertile time. But be aware that each woman's cycle and signs are different, and no woman's cycle is perfectly regular.



Pros

- Both partners share responsibility
- No known health risks
- No side effects

- Is inexpensive or free
- If you abstain from sex during fertile periods, this method is approved by all religious communities
- Easy to stop if you decide you want to become pregnant

Cons

- Takes time to learn
- Needs daily observation and charting
- Needs abstaining from sex or using a barrier method during fertile periods (9 or more days per month)
- Does not protect against sexually transmitted infections

When natural family planning may not be for you

Natural family planning may not be for you if:

- You don't have the full cooperation of your partner
- You haven't received training from a qualified teacher
- Your periods are not regular
- You take certain medicines or should not get pregnant due to a medical condition
- You just started having periods or you are approaching menopause

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