


family planning



Answers
at *Walgreens*[®]

A close-up photograph of a man with dark hair and a light beard, wearing a white t-shirt, gently kissing a baby's forehead. The baby is wearing a pink long-sleeved shirt and green socks. The background is a plain, light color.

Answers about family planning begin here.

If you are trying to have a baby, this is an exciting time. You may have questions, such as:

- When is the best time of the month to try to get pregnant?
- How do I know when I am pregnant?
- How do I keep healthy if I get pregnant?

Speak with your healthcare provider if you are pregnant or think you are pregnant, and use this booklet to guide you through the steps you can take to keep you and your baby healthy throughout your pregnancy.



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When is a woman fertile during her menstrual cycle?

A woman's fertile days are the few days leading up to, and including, the day of ovulation. Typically a woman can conceive during the following six days of each menstrual cycle:

- The five days prior to ovulation.
- The day of ovulation itself.

Of these six days, a woman's most fertile days are:

- The day before ovulation.
- The day of ovulation itself.

Because you can only become pregnant during these days, the correct timing of sexual intercourse is a major factor.

In addition, cycle lengths vary so it can be difficult to predict your most fertile days.¹

What methods can tell a woman when she is fertile?

Home ovulation tests are a popular and accurate way for women to know when they are likely to get pregnant. Your levels of estrogen rise when there is a mature egg in your body. Luteinizing hormone (LH) is then released. An ovulation test detects the surge of LH in your body approximately 24 to 36 hours before ovulation and tells you the two best days of your cycle to conceive.

An Advanced Digital Ovulation Test from Clearblue can detect your body's rise in estrogen rise in addition to the LH surge. This will tell you both your high and peak fertility days, which will give you more days to get pregnant. The chart below describes in more detail how an ovulation test works.²





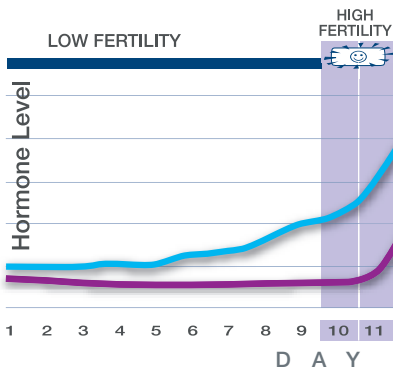
How effective is a home ovulation test?

Studies have found these tests to be more than 99% accurate at detecting the LH surge. A home ovulation test consists of a set of sticks. Once you urinate on the test stick or place the stick into urine that has been collected in a clean, dry container, the stick will indicate when it has detected the LH surge. This tells you if ovulation is about to happen. Read the package instructions on how to use the kit and properly read the test results.³

Should I speak to a specialist about possible infertility?

If you have not been able to detect a rise in LH or have not been able to

Ovulation chart

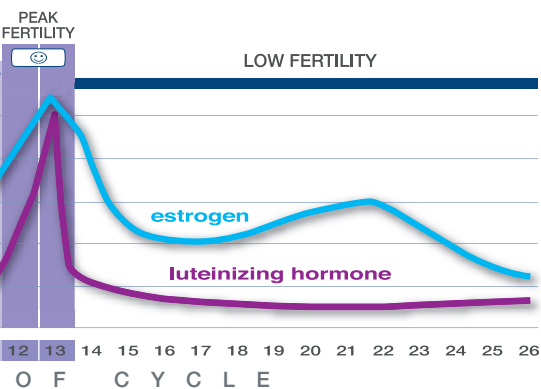


become pregnant using the home ovulation test for several months, speak to your healthcare provider/fertility specialist.⁴

What is a fertility evaluation?

A fertility evaluation is a series of tests that try to find the cause(s) of infertility. You may consider having a fertility evaluation if any of the following describes your situation:

- You have not become pregnant after one year of regular sexual intercourse without using birth control.
- You are older than 35 and have not gotten pregnant after six months of unprotected sexual intercourse.
- You have an irregular menstrual cycle.
- You or your partner has a history of infertility.⁵





What are some other methods to tell a woman when she is fertile?

• Calendar Method

This involves recording your menstrual cycle on a calendar for several months. The first day of your period is Day 1. Check off Day 1 on the calendar. The length of your cycle may vary from month to month. So write down the total number of days it lasts each time. Using this record, you can estimate the days you are most fertile in the months ahead. You will usually ovulate 12 to 16 days BEFORE your next period is due. This method can be used along with other fertility awareness methods, especially if your cycles are not always the same length.⁶ The calendar on the opposite page can help you get started.

be *i*nformed

If you are using a hormonal form of birth control, it is recommended that you allow yourself at least one normal menstrual cycle after stopping before you try to get pregnant.⁷

Fertility calendar

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
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- **Temperature method**

Tracking your basal body temperature is another way to estimate if you are ovulating. After ovulation, your body temperature may increase slightly. You'll be most fertile during the two to three days before your temperature rises. By tracking your temperature every day over several cycles using a special basal body thermometer, you will see a pattern and you may be able to estimate when you are most fertile in future cycles. However, it is important to note that this method is not foolproof.

- **Cervical mucus monitoring**

Noting changes in the nature of your cervical mucus is another way of predicting ovulation, which you can do along with tracking your body temperature. However, you may need some training from a healthcare professional to use this method reliably.⁶





- **Fertility monitors**

Both the Clearblue Easy Fertility Monitor and the Clearblue Advanced Digital Ovulation Test can predict your two most fertile days each cycle by detecting both the LH surge and the rise in estrogen that happens on the days before the LH surge.

However, a fertility monitor offers an important additional benefit—it can predict an extra 1 to 5 days of high fertility before the two days of peak fertility for most women.⁸

Ask your healthcare provider which method he or she recommends to predict ovulation and to help you determine your most fertile time of the month. Go online to the pregnancy section of Walgreens.com for an ovulation calculator. This is a quick way to get an idea of when you ovulate.

pregnancy tests



How does a home pregnancy test work?

If you think you might be pregnant, you can use an over-the-counter home pregnancy test to find out. These tests work by detecting the pregnancy hormone hCG in your urine. In most cases, you test a sample of your urine and wait a brief period of time before reading the results. Some readouts are simple lines, while others use positive and negative symbols. Digital tests display the words “Pregnant” or “Not Pregnant.” It is best to use the pregnancy test first thing in the morning. Your urine is the most concentrated at this time and there is a better chance you will get a positive hCG result if you are pregnant.⁹

How accurate are home pregnancy tests?

Most home pregnancy tests can tell you if you are pregnant one week after a missed period, and some are more than 99% accurate on the day of your expected period. Check the expiration date and follow the instructions.¹⁰

You should also confirm your home test with a blood test done at your healthcare provider's office, but it generally takes longer to get those results.¹¹

Ask your Walgreens pharmacist if you need help choosing a home pregnancy test.





Should I take a prenatal vitamin?

Talk with your healthcare provider about which prenatal vitamin is best for you before, during and after pregnancy. Prenatal vitamins will help cover any possible gaps in your nutrition. However, taking prenatal vitamins doesn't take the place of a healthy diet.

What ingredients are in prenatal vitamins?

- **Folic Acid**

One of the most important ingredients in prenatal vitamins is folic acid, because it helps prevent birth defects of the brain and spinal cord. Pregnant women are usually advised to take 400 to 800 mcg of folic acid in the very early stages of pregnancy often before they know they are pregnant. A pregnant woman should keep taking folic acid throughout pregnancy. Some healthcare providers prescribe prenatal vitamins that contain higher amounts of folic acid. Good food sources of folic acid include fortified breakfast cereals, beef liver, lentils, beans, spinach, enriched egg noodles and oranges.

• Calcium

Calcium helps maintain bone health for the mother and is necessary for the baby's bone growth.

• Iron

Iron helps in the formation of red blood cells, both in the mother and the fetus. One of its main functions is to carry oxygen throughout the body via the bloodstream. Iron can cause constipation, so drink plenty of fluids, include fiber in your diet and try to exercise daily, as long as you have approval to do so from your healthcare provider. If iron is a problem for you, talk to your healthcare provider or Walgreens pharmacist about options.

• Other vitamins

Additional ingredients found in prenatal vitamins include vitamin D, vitamin C, B vitamins (thiamine, riboflavin, niacin and vitamin B12), vitamin E, copper and zinc.¹²





What steps can my partner take to improve our chances of conception?

It is important that your partner quits or cuts down on cigarettes while you are trying to get pregnant. Illegal drugs and alcohol all have an adverse effect on the quality of sperm. Get him to wear boxer shorts for the ideal sperm quality. Bicycle riding can build up heat in his testes, so swimming is a better option, but avoid hot tubs.¹³

How can I prepare myself for pregnancy?

Start with a “preconception care” checkup and get on track with good health and nutrition habits. Your healthcare provider will ask about your diet, lifestyle, medical and family history, medication use and past pregnancies.

Most of the nutrients you need come from the food you eat, while some can come from vitamins and supplements. Being underweight or overweight can pose risks for pregnancy, so consult your healthcare provider if your weight is not within a desired range and how you can reach a healthy weight through eating and exercise. Build rest and moderate exercise—per your healthcare provider’s advice—into your day to help reduce stress.

Stop unhealthy habits such as smoking, drinking alcohol and using illegal drugs before you become pregnant. These can be harmful to your baby. Infections, including sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), can be harmful to your baby. If you think you have an infection, get tested and treated right away.

If you have diabetes, high blood pressure or thyroid problems, work to get them under control before becoming pregnant.¹⁴

References:

- 1 <http://womenshealth.gov/pregnancy/before-you-get-pregnant/trying-to-conceive.html#a>.
- 2 <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/007062.htm>.
- 3 <http://www.americanpregnancy.org/gettingpregnant/ovulationkits.html>.
- 4 <http://womenshealth.gov/pregnancy/before-you-get-pregnant/trying-to-conceive.html#c>.
- 5 <http://womenshealth.gov/pregnancy/before-you-get-pregnant/trying-to-conceive.html#b>.
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- 7 <http://www.webmd.com/baby/features/getting-pregnant-after-birth-control>.
- 8 <http://www.webmd.com/infertility-and-reproduction/fertility-tests-for-women?page=3>.
- 9 <http://womenshealth.gov/publications/our-publications/fact-sheet/pregnancy-tests.cfm#c>.
- 10 <http://womenshealth.gov/publications/our-publications/fact-sheet/pregnancy-tests.cfm#d>.
- 11 <http://womenshealth.gov/publications/our-publications/fact-sheet/pregnancy-tests.cfm#f>.
- 12 <http://www.webmd.com/baby/guide/prenatal-vitamins>.
- 13 <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/fertility/MC00023/NSECTIONGROUP=2..>
- 14 <http://www.acog.org/~media/For%20Patients/faq056.pdf?dmc=1&ts=20121126T1328297922>.

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Questions about which family planning products are right for you?

Walgreens pharmacists can help you determine the best products for your individual needs. Consult with one of our knowledgeable pharmacists in store or log on to **Walgreens.com/PharmacyChat** to chat with a live pharmacist anytime, day or night.

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