



**ACHIEVING PREGNANCY
WITH THE FERTILITY EXPERTS**



“Thanks for helping us with all the information we needed to conceive our little girl. She is a bundle of joy!” Jane, 32 years

Introduction

Sometimes falling pregnant just doesn't happen as quickly as you would like. If you've been trying for a baby for some time you may be feeling that it's time to get some help through assisted reproduction technology like IVF. But first you may like to consider a natural alternative— a method that is effective, non-invasive, affordable, device-free, drug-free and simple to use.

Give your baby-making a boost with the Natural Fertility experts! 50 years of medically proven fertility care with optimum results. Sound good? Read on...

Contents

- 1: Boost Your Baby-Making with Billings! 5
- 2: Brace Yourself... I'm going to talk about Cervical Mucus! 6
 - Learn to Identify Your Pre-Ovulatory Pattern of Infertility:7
 - Learn to Recognise the Signs of Beginning Fertility:8
- 3: Pinpointing the Peak 10
- 4: Take the Guess Work out of Conceiving 12
 - How to Keep the Chart: 12
 - Guidelines to Maximise your Chances of Conceiving: 13
- 5: Are you "Infertile"? Don't Panic! 14
- 6: BONUS 15
- 7: So Now You Know... 15
- 8: References 16



Did you know...

The Billings Ovulation Method™ has been subjected to more scientific research than any other method of regulating fertility, natural or otherwise?



1: Boost Your Baby-Making with Billings!

Billings LIFE has helped many couples to become pregnant, including those who had been trying to conceive for more than two years or who had failed attempts with IVF. A [recent trial](#) demonstrated a pregnancy rate of 78 percent, with a 65 percent success rate in sub-fertile couples. Compare this to pregnancy rates of [around 20 percent achieved with one cycle of IVF](#).

They should be known as
the baby makers!

Cate Toomey

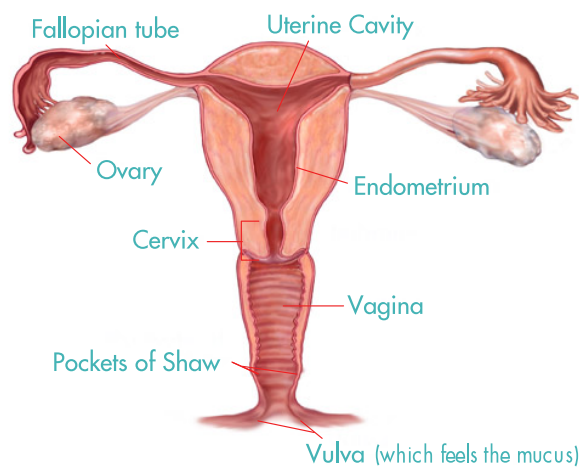
One of the easiest ways to increase your chances of conceiving is to know when you are most fertile. So one of the best things you can do is to get to know your body. Billings LIFE helps you to do just that. With Billings LIFE you will learn to understand your cycle and to recognise the signs and symptoms of fertility. Information is power!

2: Brace Yourself... I'm going to talk about Cervical Mucus!

Yes, it's all about the mucus! If you have no idea what this has to do with making babies, you are not alone. A recent Australian study found that less than one in five women had correct knowledge about the signs and symptoms of fertility, and the importance of cervical mucus in achieving pregnancy.¹ Even so, you have probably noticed different types of cervical mucus during your menstrual cycle, and thought nothing of it. But far from being nothing, this mucus, which is produced by the cells of the cervix for a few days before ovulation, is essential for fertility. The sensation and appearance of this mucus at the vaginal opening (called the vulva) help you to identify the fertile and infertile times in your cycle.

"It just seems so obvious. I don't know how I didn't notice it before." Kate, 28 years

The Female Reproductive System



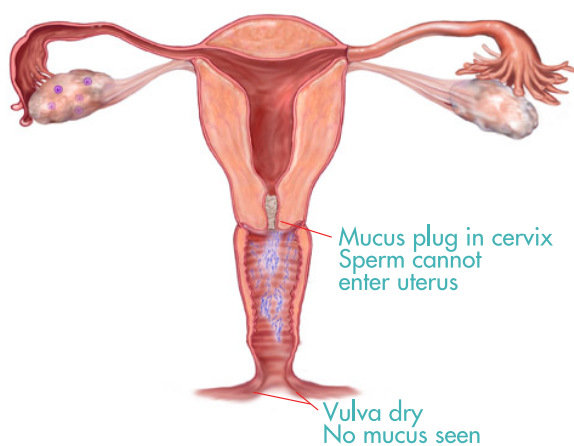
¹ The Ovulation Method Research and Reference Centre Australia. (2010). *Pregnancy outcomes associated with peak fertility.*

Learn to Identify Your Pre-Ovulatory Pattern of Infertility

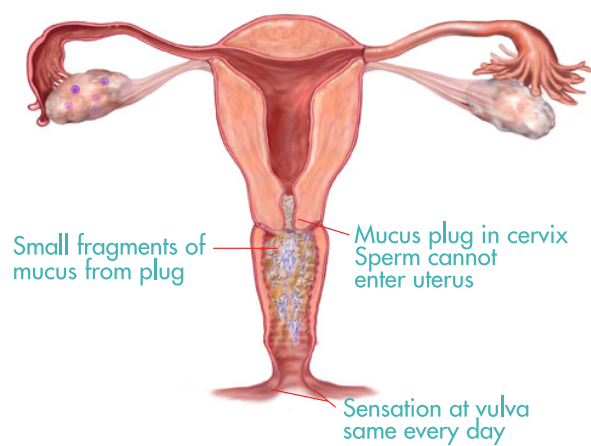
Following menstruation your hormone levels are low. Your cervix becomes blocked by a thick plug of mucus that prevents sperm from entering the uterus. This means that you are infertile. For many women the sensation at the vulva during this time is one of dryness. This is described as a *Basic Infertile Pattern of dryness*. Other women notice a pattern of discharge that does not change. It has the same sensation and appearance day after day. For these women, this discharge also indicates infertility. This is described as a *Basic Infertile Pattern of discharge*.

“Fertility is associated with rapid changes in hormone production. Anything static must be infertile. This is the basis for the Basic Infertile Pattern.”²

Basic Infertile Pattern of Dryness



Basic Infertile Pattern of Discharge



² M. Corkill & M. Marshall, (2008, December 19), Natural fertility regulation – the Billings Ovulation Method. *Australian Doctor, How to Treat*.

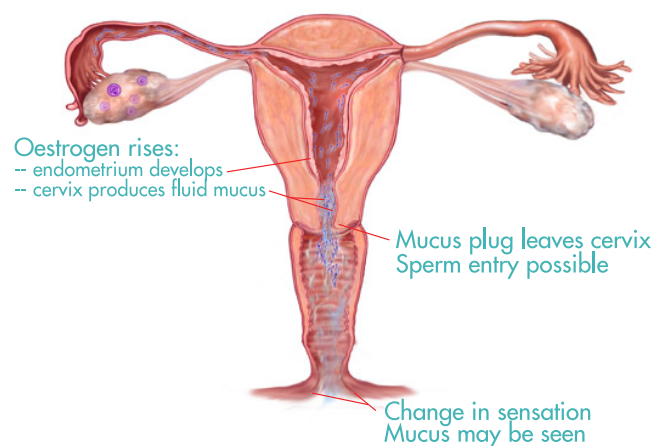
Learn to Recognise the Signs of Beginning Fertility

The fertile phase of the cycle begins when the ovaries start to produce oestrogen as the egg develops. This hormone stimulates the cervix to produce different kinds of mucus. A change in the sensation and appearance of the mucus at the vulva is nature's way of letting you know that you are now potentially fertile.

One of the types of mucus produced by the cervix dissolves the mucus plug. This means that sperm can now enter the uterus. Another type of mucus acts as a filter, destroying unsuitable sperm cells. Yet another type of mucus forms channels which help the sperm travel through your reproductive system to meet and fertilise the egg. This mucus also protects and nourishes the sperm, helping them to live up to 5 days.

As the ovaries produce increasing amounts of oestrogen you will notice a changing pattern of mucus and a difference in the sensation the mucus produces. The mucus becomes progressively wetter and then slippery. You may notice the mucus becomes thinner and clearer. But even if you don't see any mucus, the sensation of slipperiness means that you are fertile.

Changing Pattern of Fertility



The fertile phase begins on average about 6 days before ovulation. But even if it only lasts a day, recognising the change in sensation and appearance of the mucus can give you the knowledge to help maximise your chances of conceiving.



“At first I thought I wasn’t producing any mucus. Then, one day, after keeping watch for six months, I saw and felt it. There was no doubt in my mind, and we had sex that day. The next day it felt different and the mucus was gone. Six weeks later the doctor confirmed that our baby was on the way.”³

³ Taken from: Dr Evelyn Billings & Dr Ann Westmore, (2011), *The Billings Method*, Melbourne, Australia: Anne O’Donovan Publishing, p.47.



3: Pinpointing the Peak

It is important to realise that the Peak is not necessarily the day of *most* mucus. The amount of mucus may decrease but the slippery sensation may continue for a day or two— the sensation is the most valuable symptom.

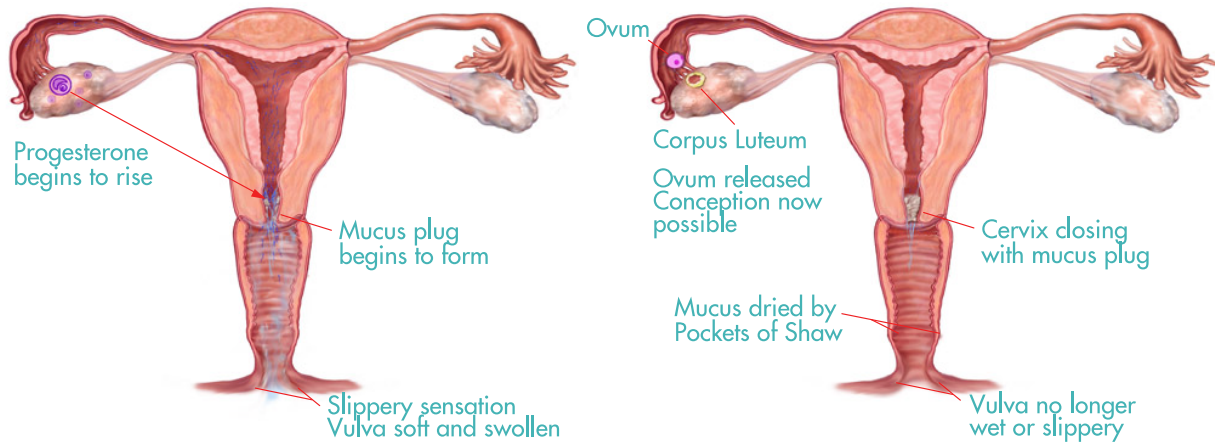
The last day of the slippery sensation is the most fertile day of your cycle. It is called the Peak of fertility, and is very close to the time of ovulation... so a great day for baby-making! You can be sure that if you recognise the Peak of fertility then you have identified the time very close to ovulation.

Just before ovulation another hormone called progesterone starts to be produced. This hormone prepares the lining of the uterus in case there is a fertilised egg ready to implant. Progesterone also causes changes in the cervical mucus. It activates the cervix to produce the thick, impenetrable mucus that forms the plug in the cervix. It also activates the reabsorption of fluid from the mucus so that the slippery sensation disappears. So it is the rising level of progesterone that causes the abrupt change in sensation that helps you identify the Peak.

You will only be able to confirm your Peak day the following day, when you no longer feel the slippery sensation. Ovulation occurs on the peak day in the majority of cycles, but may be delayed until day 1 or day 2 past the peak. The egg will live for up to 24 hours. During these 3 days past the peak the plug of mucus reforms in the cervix. After the end of the 3 days your fertile time for that cycle is over.

The Peak of Fertility

Days 1, 2, and 3 Past the Peak



"We were both past 40 when we married and I didn't recognise a Peak for some months, but when it came we were ready for it! Our beautiful daughter is such a gift and a blessing."










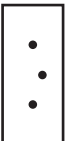




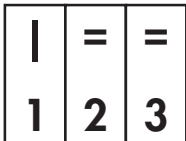

Andrea and Simon

4: Take the Guesswork out of Conceiving

By keeping a daily record of the sensation and appearance of mucus at the vulva you can learn to recognise your times of infertility and fertility, and the time of ovulation. Don't worry if your pattern isn't like that of another woman. Every woman is an individual with her own individual pattern. Most women quickly grasp the pattern of their fertility, and a trained Billings Ovulation Method™ tutor can ensure that you are correctly interpreting your chart. A World Health Organisation trial in five countries show that over 90 percent of women can identify the fertile phase and the Peak day of fertility in their first month of observation and charting.

How to Keep the Chart

At the end of each day you record your observations of the sensation produced by the mucus outside the vagina. If you see any mucus you write down your observations of its appearance. Just a couple of words on your chart and then use appropriate coloured stamps or write the symbol that represents what has happened.

							
bleeding	spotting	dry infertile	possibly fertile	discharge, infertile i) BIP of unchanging discharge before peak ii) from the 4th day past the Peak	Peak	1 2 3 days after Peak possibly fertile - dry or mucus which is not wet or slippery	Intercourse
							

For further information on keeping a Billings Ovulation Method™ chart [click here](#)

Even better, learn how to chart and interpret your individual patterns of fertility and infertility with an experienced Billings Ovulation Method™ tutor.

Phone 1 800 335 860 to book your consultation today.

Guidelines to Maximise your Chances of Conceiving

To achieve a pregnancy you apply the Early Day Rules of the Billings Ovulation Method™ so you can clearly identify when you become potentially fertile. Once you notice a change from your Basic Infertile Pattern (BIP), wait without sex until you notice the slippery sensation. The slippery sensation means that you're at your most fertile, and that ovulation is very close. Sex over the days of the slippery sensation and the first day or two past the Peak will give you the best chance of conceiving. This is because it's possible for ovulation to occur as long as 48 hours after the last day of the slippery sensation, and the egg stays alive for up to 24 hours. From three days past the Peak you'll no longer be able to conceive in that cycle.

You may only observe the slippery sensation in some cycles, or for just a short time during a cycle, so you simply time sex to coincide with these times. It's important to be really aware of the feeling of the mucus at the vulva, so that even if you don't see anything you'll still know when you're potentially fertile.

The Early Day Rules apply to the days before ovulation

Early Day Rule 1

Avoid intercourse on days of heavy menstrual bleeding

In a short cycle fertility may begin before bleeding has finished, and the bleeding could mask the presence of the mucus which indicates fertility.

Early Day Rule 2

You can have intercourse on alternate evenings of your Basic Infertile Pattern (BIP)

You wait until evening so you can be sure there has been no change from your BIP. You need to be upright and moving about for a few hours for the mucus to flow down to where you can become aware of it at the vulva. The reason for *alternate* evenings is because the day after sex you may feel damp and see a discharge of seminal fluid, and this can mask a change in the mucus pattern.

Early Day Rule 3

When there is a change from your BIP, wait and see

Once you notice a change from your BIP, wait without sex until you notice the slippery sensation. This signals that you're at your most fertile, and that ovulation is very close. Resume having sex while the slippery sensation is present and the vulva feels soft and slightly swollen, and for one or two days after the Peak.

Your Billings Ovulation Method™ tutor can help you interpret your individual patterns of fertility and infertility and to correctly apply these guidelines.

5: Are you “Infertile”? Don’t Panic!

If you have been trying for a baby for a year or more you may start hearing the term “infertile” bandied about. In fact, **one in six couples is classified as infertile**. But the majority of “infertile” couples are actually only “sub-fertile.” This means that they do produce eggs and sperm but have difficulty conceiving due to disorders such as hormonal imbalances and problems of the reproductive tract.⁴

Factors that can contribute to infertility:

- age
- smoking
- alcohol
- being overweight or underweight
- anxiety and stress

Or it can simply mean that you lack the correct information to identify your fertility. Many sub-fertile couples do end up getting pregnant, it just takes a bit longer. Learning to recognise your signs and symptoms of fertility can prove invaluable. This simple information has helped many couples to become pregnant, even those previously classified as sub-fertile.

Your Billings Ovulation Method™ tutor will offer you the time, support and practical advice to deal with everyday problems.

You will be referred for further professional help where appropriate.

Phone 1800 335 860 to book your appointment with a Billings Ovulation Method™ tutor.

⁴ ABC Health & Wellbeing. Fact File: Infertility.
<<http://www.abc.net.au/health/library/stories/2007/05/30/1919840.htm>>
Accessed 25 Aug 2011



"I just wanted to thank you for your advice and help with trying to conceive our son – it worked for us!" Zeta, 33 years

6: BONUS

[Download your free Personal Record Chart now!](#)

7: So Now You Know...

...how essential cervical mucus is for fertility. Changing hormone levels throughout your menstrual cycle affect the amount and texture of the mucus. Each kind of mucus has a special role to play. Once you are familiar with these changes you will be able to identify your own pattern of infertility and fertility. This knowledge is empowering! It can help you to achieve that longed-for pregnancy. It is knowledge that every woman ought to have.

8: References

Billings, E., & Westmore, A. (2011). *The Billings Method: Using the body's natural signal of fertility to achieve or avoid pregnancy*. Melbourne, Australia: Anne O'Donovan Publishing.

Billings, J.J. (2002). *The Billings Ovulation Method in China*. Melbourne, Australia: Ovulation Method Research & Reference Centre of Australia.

Brown, J.B. (2011). Types of ovarian activity in women and their significance: the continuum (a reinterpretation of early findings). *Human Reproduction Update*, 17(2), 141-158. <http://humupd.oxfordjournals.org/content/17/2/141.full.pdf+html>

Corkill, M. & Marshall, M. (2008, December 19). Natural fertility regulation – the Billings Ovulation Method. *Australian Doctor, How to Treat*. <http://www.thebillingsovulationmethod.org/2012-07-16-02-14-24/articles-download-2.html?view=docman>

“This is knowledge of her body that every woman ought to have.”

Dr Evelyn Billings AM, DCSG, MBBS (MELB), DCH (LOND)



Billings LIFE
Leaders In Fertility Education

2A/303 Burwood Highway
East Burwood 3151 Australia

Phone: 03 9802 2022

Fax: 03 9887 8572

Email: enquiries@thebillingsovulationmethod.org

Web: www.thebillingsovulationmethod.org

Billings LIFE is a fully registered health promotion charity and all donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

The Ovulation Method Research and Reference Centre of Australia Ltd
ABN 57 067 377 959 (inc in Vic)

Billings LIFE is supported by funding from the Australian Government
Department of Health and Ageing