

Fertility Awareness-Based (FAB) Contraceptive Methods

What are FAB methods?

FAB methods help people understand how to prevent a pregnancy by not having sex during the fertile time. There are many different methods (e.g., Standard Days Method®, Calendar Rhythm Method, Cervical Mucous, Basal Body Temperature, TwoDay Method®, Symptothermal Method).

With FAB methods, a person:

- identifies the most likely time to get pregnant (fertile time)
- must not have sex (abstain) or use another method of birth control during the fertile time
- needs one-to-one training to know how to use the methods the right way

How well do FAB methods work to prevent pregnancy?

- There's about an 85% chance of getting pregnant after 1 year of having unprotected sex.
- How well FAB methods work is hard to estimate. With typical use (not following exact directions) the pregnancy rate is about 24% after 1 year.
- FAB methods don't protect you from sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV.
- Use a condom **every time** you have sex (vaginal, oral, anal) to lower your risk of STIs and HIV.

FAB methods may **not** work and aren't recommended if you:

- have periods that aren't regular
- have recently had a baby
- have conditions that affect body temperature (e.g., fever, trouble sleeping, shift work)
- have just started having periods
- are breastfeeding
- are getting close to menopause
- have recently stopped a hormonal method of birth control
- have a lot of vaginal infections, which makes it hard to track your cervical mucus

Don't use FAB methods if a pregnancy would:

- be hard for you
- put your health at risk because of a medical problem

Talk to your health care provider to decide if FAB methods are right for you.

What are the benefits of FAB methods?

- There are no added hormones.
- You don't need any birth control supplies except a basal thermometer and a way to keep track of your information (e.g., monthly charts, calendar). FAB methods may work well if you have certain personal, religious, or cultural beliefs about birth control.

What are the disadvantages of FAB methods?

- You have to keep track **every day** so you know exactly where you're at in your cycle.
- To use these FAB methods you need to have good communication with your partner. You'll need to talk about being abstinent or using a barrier method of birth control (e.g., condom) during fertile times.

Where can I get more information?

If you're interested in FAB methods, contact the organizations below for teaching and support:

- World Organization of Ovulation Method Billings at woomb.org
- Justisse Healthworks for Women at justisse.ca
- Serena at serena.ca
- Creighton Model Fertility Care™ System at creightonmodel.com

Did you know

- You have the right to make the decision to have sex or not.
- Plan ahead and talk to your partner about how to protect yourself and lower your risk of pregnancy, STIs, and HIV. Use a condom every time you have sex.
- Many sexual health clinics offer some types of birth control for no cost for those who qualify.
- Get **emergency contraception** as soon as possible to help prevent pregnancy if you think you haven't followed FAB methods correctly.
- Fertility monitors (e.g., ovulation predictor kits, electronic hormonal fertility monitors) can be used to improve FAB methods.
- FAB methods can also be used to help you get pregnant.

Websites

- ahs.ca/srh
- myhealth.alberta.ca
- ReadyOrNotAlberta.ca
- sexualityandu.ca
- teachingsexualhealth.ca

For 24/7 nurse advice and general health information, call Health Link at 811.

This material is for information purposes only. It should not be used in place of medical advice, instruction and/or treatment. If you have questions, speak with your doctor or appropriate healthcare provider.