

The Billings Ovulation Method (BOM)

Developed by Drs. John and Evelyn Billings, it identifies fertile and infertile times in a woman's cycle through observation of cervical mucus. An extensive trial has shown a method effectiveness rating of 99.2%⁴.

Phone: 1800 335 860

www.thebillingsovulationmethod.org

FertilityCare, the Creighton Model System

Identifies the fertile and infertile phases of a woman's cycle by identification of biomarkers based on the cervical mucus, types of bleeding and dry mucus days, and has a 99.5% method effectiveness⁵. FertilityCare can also be used to help diagnose and treat problems with fertility.

Phone (02) 9847 0486. www.fertilitycare.com.au

References

- (1) Pope Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae*.
- (2) Pope John Paul II, *Theology of the Body*.
- (3) Frank-Hermann P. et al, *Human Reproduction* (2007), pp 1-10.
- (4) Indian Council of Medical Research Task Force on NFP (1995), *Contraception* 1996 Vol 53: pp 69-74.
- (5) TW Hilgers, JB Stanford, "Creighton Model NaProEducation Technology for avoiding pregnancy: use effectiveness", *J Reprod Med* (1998), 43: pp 495-502.

More information can be found at naturalfertilityaustralia.org.au and www.totalgift.org, and also by contacting the Parish Support Unit, Diocese of Broken Bay or CatholicCare (or the appropriate agency) of other dioceses.

Credit

Evelyn Brien *B.Ed. (A Ed)*.

is the immediate Past President of the Australian Council of Natural Family Planning (ACNFP). Evelyn has been an accredited Educator of Natural Fertility for the past 30 years and for 12 years was the Manager of Centacare Sydney's Marriage Education and Natural Fertility Programs.

Adult Faith Formation Series



Diocese of Broken Bay, 423 Pennant Hills Road,
Pennant Hills, NSW 2120

PO Box 340 Pennant Hills NSW 1715

Phone: (02) 9847 0000

Fax: (02) 9847 0001

www.dbb.org.au

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Contraception & Natural Fertility Methods



The Catholic Church has a very positive message about sex and sexuality! – “Sex is Life-giving Love!”

When a couple marry within the Church they vow to “give themselves freely and totally, to love and honour each other for all of their lives and to accept children lovingly from God.” Couples live out this vow in their daily lives. They also renew and celebrate this vow when they ‘make love’ in a sexual union by which they become ‘one body’ and potential parents ‘open to new life’.

Pope Paul VI taught that “sex should be both life giving and love giving”¹.

Pope John Paul II taught that “sex should be a sacred language of love – both life giving and love giving and that these two aspects of the sexual act cannot be separated”².

Because of the natural cycle of fertility, sexual intercourse does not usually lead to conception. However, it is always the kind of bodily union that naturally leads to conception, the kind of act in which couples can say to each other: I give you all of myself, including my fertility.

If we deliberately try to separate the love-giving (unitive) and the life-giving (procreative) aspects of our sexual love-making by using contraception, then we deny part of who we are as sexual beings. Contraception changes the meaning of the sexual act so that a person really says:



“I give you all of myself except my fertility” or “I receive all that you are except your fertility, as I am not willing to accept the possibility of having a child with you”.

The Church teaches that contraception is wrong because it eliminates the procreative aspect of sexual union, making sex less than God intends it to be, and so compromises the total gift of self. However, the Church encourages the use of natural methods of fertility management because these methods continue to respect the procreative meaning of intercourse.

“After marriage, we used the pill. I often didn’t feel like making love, a common side effect of hormonal contraception. Since we have learnt how to use a natural fertility method my libido has increased and making love has become more meaningful. We have connected more and talk more. Strangely enough it seems to have become more sacred.” **Couple aged in their 40’s**

The Church does not teach that a couple should intend to have a baby every time they make love. Rather, the Church calls couples to responsible parenthood, recognising that there are many and varied reasons why a couple may rightly decide not to have a baby at a particular time. Using a method of natural fertility awareness, couples simply refrain from intercourse at times when they are likely to be fertile.

Natural fertility awareness involves both partners in the decision-making about whether to have intercourse during the fertile phase of the cycle.

Couples ask “*How does a natural fertility method differ from artificial methods of contraception?*”

Couples who use contraception make their sexual intercourse non procreative, and so withhold from each other a part of the gift of themselves. Couples who use a natural method simply choose not to have intercourse at times of fertility because they accept and respect the procreative possibilities of intercourse.

Modern natural methods allow couples to work with God’s gift of fertility in order to plan their family responsibly. Methods include the Sympto-Thermal Method, the Billings Ovulation Method and Fertility Care, the Creighton Model. All are highly effective and empower couples with knowledge and understanding of their reproductive health. An added bonus is that many couples report an improvement in their relationship because they communicate better and are working together to a common goal whether it be to achieve or to postpone a pregnancy.

There are many advantages for a couple who use a natural method, learning about the bodily changes associated with the fertile and infertile phases of the menstrual cycle and making a joint decision about when to have intercourse dependent upon whether they wish to achieve or postpone a pregnancy. Unlike the old Rhythm method, modern methods are highly effective and can be used at any stage of the woman’s fertile life, from puberty to menopause.

Fertility is a gift to appreciate and value as a normal part of every person’s life. A bonus about using a natural method is that couples who are having difficulty becoming pregnant have the knowledge to maximise their chances of a pregnancy by having intercourse in the most fertile phase of the cycle.

Research shows that effectiveness improves when adequate instruction and guidance have been provided by an accredited Educator and the couple is motivated to use the method according to the rules.

Often seen as a disadvantage is that in order to avoid a pregnancy a couple has to abstain for a short time during the fertile phase of the menstrual cycle. The time of abstinence varies, dependent upon which natural method is chosen and will at times be difficult. Interestingly many couples find the time of abstinence a time of renewal for their relationship. They do not stop loving one another but simply use the time to build their intimacy in other ways.

“Although there have been times when the abstinence was really hard and we wanted to make love, we re-discovered the ways we showed love before we were married. We also found that having a break from making love enhanced the magic when we did come together again.” **Couple aged in their 30’s**

Natural Fertility Methods

The Sympto-Thermal Method of Natural Fertility (STM)

STM is a modern, scientifically-proven multi-indicator method. Uses Mucus & Temperature. Recent studies show an effectiveness rating of 99.6%³. Phone: 1800 114 010 www.acnfp.com.au