



MARQUETTE MODEL

Natural Family Planning

NFP Quick Instructions for the Marquette Model (Mucus Only)

These instructions assume that you wish to use cervical mucus as your primary biological marker of fertility. The following instructions start on the first day of your next menstrual cycle. The menstrual cycle begins on the first day of your period (i.e., your menses).

Please note: there are only 6 days of fertility during a menstrual cycle - the day of ovulation and the 5 days before. These 6 days are called the "fertile window." You need to know the **beginning, peak, and end** of the fertile window. You can estimate the fertile window by observing the changes in your cervical mucus. Your mucus can tell you the beginning, peak, and end of your fertile window. The picture below shows a how a "mucus-cycle" fertile window might look. At first the mucus is minimal, tacky, and cloudy, then changes to stretchy cloudy, then to very clear, stretchy, slippery mucus at the peak of fertility and back again to tacky cloudy type mucus at the end of the fertile window. Mucus cycles will vary from woman to woman and from cycle to cycle.

The Mucus Cycle

Fertility Level:



How do you check your mucus? First you think about how the mucus feels at the opening of your vagina throughout the day. Think about how it feels every time you go to the bathroom and before going to bed. When you go to the bathroom you can also look at the mucus. You can do this by wiping from front to back at the opening of your vagina. You do this by using soft white (non-scented) toilet tissue and wiping or blotting the vulva. The mucus can be looked at on the tissue for its color and texture. Finger testing the mucus will help you to see the mucus. Lift the mucus off of the tissue and look at it at eye level between the finger and thumb. Finger testing mucus will allow you to observe how stretchy the mucus is and if it is cloudy or clear.

It is important that you check for your mucus every day, every time you go to the bathroom, and before you go to bed. If you miss or skip looking at the mucus you will not have a total record of your fertility. At the end of the day, after the last check before going to bed, the most fertile mucus sign should be recorded on a fertility chart.

Early cervical mucus can feel slightly moist or sticky, and appear scant, thick, white, and hold its shape. Your fertility currently is **low**.

As your menstrual cycle progresses cervical mucus will increase in amount and become thinner, cloudy, and slightly stretchy. The feel of the mucus might also change from moist and sticky to wet. When your mucus looks and feels like this fertility is **high**.

The highly fertile time of the cycle is when the mucus cycle "peaks". Mucus at this time feels very slippery. The mucus will be clear, very stretchy, and look like raw egg white. You will see and feel a lot of mucus. Sometimes the mucus is so watery that there is no mucus to pick up and you will only feel very wet and slippery. You now are at the peak of your fertility. The last day of any mucus that is clear, stretchy and feels slippery is the **peak day** of fertility. This day coincides closely with the day of ovulation.

A simple formula has been developed to go along with your cervical mucus observations as a double check for the beginning and end of the fertile window. See the instructions below for how to avoid or achieve pregnancy and to estimate the fertile window.

TO AVOID PREGNANCY:

Do not have intercourse or genital contact during the fertile window – i.e., from the first day of fertility through the last day of fertility. The length and time of the fertile window will vary from cycle to cycle. You are asked to refrain from intercourse on all "high" and "peak" days and to use the following instructions for determining the fertile window.

THE BEGINNING OF FERTILITY:

1. Fertility BEGINS on day 6 of the first 6 cycles.
2. After 6 cycles, fertility BEGINS on the earliest day of "peak" type mucus during the last 6 cycles minus 6 days or the first "high" mucus reading - whichever comes first.

THE END OF FERTILITY:

3. Fertility ENDS on the last "peak" day of cervical mucus plus 3 full days.
4. After 6 cycles, fertility ENDS on the last "peak" day of the last 6 cycles plus 3 full days, or the last "peak" day of cervical mucus plus a count of 3 full days - whichever comes first.

These instructions are to be used only for those women who have cycles between 22 and 42 days in length. If there are two or more cycles that fall out of that range or the menstrual cycles vary by more than 10 days, see your professional NFP teacher for advice.

Women who are coming off hormonal contraception, who recently were pregnant, or who recently stopped breastfeeding should wait until they have at least 2 natural menstrual cycles in a row before using these instructions. There is a separate protocol for women who are breastfeeding and not in cycles.

TO ACHIEVE PREGNANCY:

Have intercourse on "high" and "peak" fertility days.

Please download a blank and example mucus fertility chart.