



Reduction in Length of Labour
(by an average of 98 minutes)

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Charting Your Cycle For Conception

By Kelly Zantey
BellyBelly Creator, Mum & Birth Attendant

Perhaps you have just begun the conception 'rollercoaster' or maybe you are looking at ways to help increase your chances at conception. Read on – because it's amazing what you can learn about your own body and even help it to conceive by simply charting your cycle each month.

Firstly, the benefits of charting are huge. For a little effort, you can really get to know your body, your most fertile times and least fertile times. You may even learn to accurately predict when you might ovulate and know the signs your own, unique body will give to indicate a pregnancy.

Charting is a daily activity, where you record observations made by your body, which may tell you some little clues as to what your cycle is doing. The main fertility signs involved which most charts are based on include the following:

BBT or Basal Body Temperature

When charting, it is best to take your temperature first thing in the morning before you get up. It's important to take this temperature at the same time everyday, with the same thermometer, after three hours of uninterrupted sleep. While this is not always possible, there is no need to worry if you forget or have a bad chart day! I fell pregnant with my second child on my first charted cycle, with lots of interrupted sleep and some irregular time taking!

When you purchase a thermometer, the best sort to buy should have BBT on it, however I know many people that have successfully charted with a thermometer from the supermarket or chemist. As long as you use the same one to recognise your body's fluctuations you'll be fine.

Cervical Mucus

Sounds strange but keeping a close eye on your cervical mucus is another good indicator. If you feel uncomfortable about this, that is fine, however the more methods you include in your chart, the more accurate it may be. Cervical mucus changes with the fluctuations in your hormones like oestrogen. Following a period, mucus will typically be dry before becoming sticky, then creamy, then watery before becoming it's most fertile state of clear and stretchy (referred to as looking like egg white). This best aids the sperm on it's passage to the egg. You wouldn't expect them to swim well in dry or creamy mucus! To read more about cervical mucus observations, please read our article [here](#).



ARTICLE SUMMARY

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Ovulation Prediction Kits (OPK's)

These can be purchased online, from your pharmacy or even supermarket. They can be expensive for the ultimate in accuracy, but works all the same for the cheaper brands. They work like a pregnancy test but measures you levels of LH, which indicate that you will be likely ovulating in the next 12-48 hours. Hence a great time to "BD" or baby dance!

Maybe Baby

This can also be purchased from pharmacies and online. Maybe Baby is a handheld mini-microscope, which enables you to observe the microscopic picture of a dry saliva sample. By observing your saliva crystallisation, this enables you to follow your monthly cycle, determining the ovulation period which appears as 'ferning' unlike other infertile times.

Cervical Position

The position of your cervix changes throughout your cycle which can give you further clues to your fertility. It may take a little time for you to get used to the different positions, so give yourself a little time to learn – it's going to be difficult to know the very first time if your cervix is high or low. A low, hard, dry and closed cervix is least fertile, a high, soft, wet and open cervix most fertile. Checking the position of your cervix is best done at the same time each day due to changes which may occur throughout the day.

Charting Online

Charting online has become very popular as it does a great deal of the work for you and stores your information. You just need to enter in your observations. A website which is extremely popular is <http://www.fertilityfriend.com>

There is some lingo to learn but it doesn't take long and you're a pro – just ask any of our very friendly TTC'ers in our [forums](#)! For example, day one of your period would be CD1 (cycle day 1). It is best to start on CD1 to do your charting.

Also in the [BellyBelly Forums](#), our moderators keeps a daily list of cycles for our members, so you can keep track of where you are. You'll also find plenty of help to interpret and suggest ideas by more experienced charters.

All the best with charting your cycle and may it help you achieve a faster pregnancy.

Kelly Zantey is the Director of [BellyBelly](#) and [Toys4Tikes](#), as well as a mum to two beautiful children. Just because that isn't enough, she is also studying to become a Birth Attendant – her course will be completed in November 2005.

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