

# Natural Family Planning Options



CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF MELBOURNE

# What is Natural Family Planning?

Natural Family Planning (NFP) is the name given to Family planning methods that use the naturally occurring signs of Fertility in a woman's menstrual cycle. On a day-to-day basis a woman is able to observe clear signs that show she is either Fertile or infertile.

NFP is unique because unlike other methods of Family planning, no drugs, devices or surgical procedures are used. To avoid pregnancy a couple abstains from intercourse during a woman's Fertile phase. Alternatively, couples can also use NFP to achieve a pregnancy, by identifying the time of ovulation.

There are three main methods of NFP available in Melbourne – the Sympto-Thermal Method, the Billings Ovulation Method and the FertilityCare Creighton Model System. They are all based on the primary indicator of Fertility – cervical secretions; however, each method takes a different approach in reading and recording these biomarkers of Fertility.

Evidence-based studies have shown that the three methods of NFP are at least 97-99% effective in avoiding pregnancy, when followed correctly. This compares favourably with contraception. Furthermore, for couples seeking to achieve pregnancy, NFP can help in the identification and treatment of underlying causes of infertility without recourse to invasive and expensive treatments such as IVF.

## Couples experiencing unplanned pregnancy in first year of perfect use

Sympto-Thermal Method of Natural Family Planning	0.3%
Billings Ovulation Method of Natural Family Planning	0.5%
Creighton Method of Natural Family Planning	0.5%
Combined Pill and mini-pill	0.3%
Condom	2%
Nuva Ring, Depo-Provera	0.3%
Diaphragm	6%

\* Journal of American Board of Family Medicine Mar-Apr. 2009. Vol 22 No.2  
Fertility-Awareness Based Methods: Another Option For Family Planning.  
By Stephen R. Pallone MD and George R. Bergus MD.

# Billings Ovulation Method

In the Billings Ovulation Method, the key to understanding Fertility is noting what is Felt at the vaginal opening (vulva). This mucus, produced by the cervix for a few days before ovulation, is essential for Fertility. Understanding this natural signal of Fertility requires paying attention to the sensation it produces without the need to touch it or make an internal investigation.

When Fertility begins, a woman can notice a change in sensation at the vulva which develops over the next few days. Any mucus seen is likely to become thinner and clearer and the sensation becomes wet and then slippery. Clinical and laboratory studies show that the most Fertile time in the cycle coincides with what is referred to as the Peak – the last day of the slippery sensation at the vulva.





# Sympto-Thermal Method

The Sympto-Thermal Method (STM) of NFP relies on couples learning to observe a number of signs of ovulation – cervical mucus, body temperature and other useful indicators, which identify the Fertile and infertile phases of every cycle, whether regular or irregular. Using more than one indicator allows a woman to more accurately and objectively identify her Fertile window.

STM encourages and supports couples to take a shared responsibility in their sexual and procreative health.

STM helps couples to strengthen their communication skills, engender mutual respect through a deeper understanding of each other and develop greater Friendship and intimacy because they are working together on a common goal.





STM charts reveal valuable and time-saving information for couples having difficulty conceiving including:

- Effective and non-invasive ovulation detection
- Definition of cervical secretion quality
- Determination of post-ovulatory length
- Verification of irregular bleeding

STM ... no drugs, no side effects, no health risks, no devices ... And as effective as the Pill.

For more information:

[www.cam.org.au/naturalfertilityservices](http://www.cam.org.au/naturalfertilityservices)



# FertilityCare Creighton Model System

The FertilityCare Creighton Model System (CrMS) combines natural Fertility awareness with a medical treatment program (NaProTechnology) to help people reach their Full procreative health. NaProTechnology refers to Natural Procreative Technology. It is an emerging medical science that works co-operatively with the body's natural procreative cycles.

Like other methods of NFP, FertilityCare relies upon the observation and charting of biological markers (cervical secretions) that are essential to a woman's health and Fertility. While these biomarkers tell a couple when they are naturally Fertile and infertile they also highlight any abnormalities that may be present.

FertilityCare can be used successfully by:

- Married couples having difficulties achieving a pregnancy
- Married couples who have experienced miscarriages or ectopic pregnancy
- Women wishing to care for their own gynaecological health, including those with problems such as Pre Menstrual Syndrome, irregular cycles, unusual



- bleeding, polycystic ovarian syndrome, ovarian cysts, endometriosis, postnatal depression and other conditions
- Couples wanting to learn about their Fertility and plan their Families



FertilityCare uses a medically based approach to the evaluation and treatment of infertile/subfertility. It is more effective at achieving pregnancy than artificial reproductive technologies because it seeks to address any underlying causes of infertility rather than simply responding to the symptoms. It is also significantly less costly than treatments such as IVF.

FertilityCare teachers are trained allied health professionals and specifically trained doctors are educated to incorporate the CrMS into their medical practice.

For more information:  
[www.fertilitycare.com.au](http://www.fertilitycare.com.au)







## **Benefits of NFP:**

- **Effective**
- **Safe & healthy**
- **Reliable**
- **Natural**
- **Easy to learn & use**
- **Can be used to achieve or avoid pregnancy**
- **None of the negative side effects of contraception**
- **Respects a woman's natural cycle**
- **Promotes self-awareness**
- **Empowers couples**
- **Enhances communication between a couple**
- **Promotes intimacy between a couple**
- **Good for marriages**
- **Respects life**
- **Ethically sound**
- **Eco-Friendly**
- **Inexpensive**



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