Tracking your Basal Body Temperature (BBT): Other than indicating when you have ovulated, tracking body temperature also gives useful information about whether temp levels throughout your cycle are higher or lower than expected, whether your body temp rises slowly after ovulation, whether it drops too soon after ovulation, whether your follicular phase (pre-ovulation) is notably long or short, whether the luteal phase (post-ovulation) is notably long or short, and the effect of stress on your cycle. This information is all very valuable in terms of understanding what is contributing to fertility issues, and helps me plan the right treatment to support your fertility.

In order to track you BBT: You will need (1) a good thermometer, (2) an app or chart to record your results, and (3) a good night's sleep (at least 3-4 unbroken hours). Charting should start at the beginning of your menstrual cycle, i.e., the first day of bleeding. The procedure is as follows:

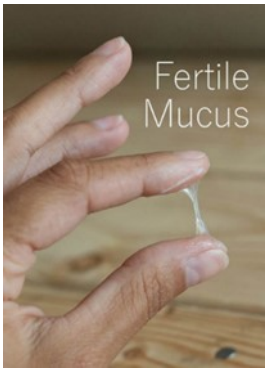
- Keep your thermometer on your bedside table.
- On waking in the morning (after a minimum of 3 hours uninterrupted sleep), and before doing anything else, place your thermometer in your mouth to take a reading.
- Note your reading in your app or chart under the correct day and date. (It's important that the temperature is taken at roughly the same time each morning, because later waking raises the body temperature.)

N.B. If you find that charting is too disruptive, you could try charting for just three cycles to establish what patterns might be occurring and then stop. If you find the process demoralising, you could stop for a few months and focus more on observing changes in fertile mucus secretions from the cervix.

BBT apps: Fertility Friend is a free app, but some people find the interface very busy. Their website provides a number of useful resources for understanding the BBT tracking process (https://www.fertilityfriend.com/videos.html). There are also paid for apps such as Kindara (https://www.kindara.com/) and Natural Cycles (https://www.naturalcycles.com/) that cost about £40 per year, and have more user-friendly interfaces. Ovusense (https://www.ovusense.com/uk/) can be a good option if you don't want to worry about taking your temperature first thing after waking, but you will need to wear or insert a thermometer in your vagina for this to work.

Ovulation predictor kits: A positive reading shows that an egg will probably be released within 12-48 hours. This can give a reliable guide to the most fertile days of your cycle, and the best days for having sex. Note: It is recommended that urine is tested during the day after avoiding liquids for about 2 hours so that it is not too dilute.

Checking Fertile Mucus: Oestrogen peak, which stimulates the production of fertile mucus, usually starts on average 6 days before ovulation. The cervical discharge at infertile times is associated with a dry feeling at the vulva. It is thick, pasty, and impenetrable. As ovulation approaches, the vaginal sensation becomes more sticky and wet, and the mucus becomes more stretchy and slippery (described as egg-white like). As ovulation is immanent, this mucus loses its stretchiness but becomes extremely slippery. This is the most fertile day of the whole cycle. One easy way to evaluate the quality and quantity of cervical secretions is, with clean fingers, to collect a little from the vaginal entrance (or gently from the cervical surface if less plentiful) and see how much elasticity there is as the fingers are drawn apart.



Checking Cervix Position (Look for HSO = High, Soft & Open): Ligaments that support the cervix respond to peak oestrogen. This pulls the uterus further up into the body, and the cervix is positioned higher in the vagina. As the cervix moves higher in the vagina, it is a little more difficult to reach and some women find they need to squat to find its surface. The texture of the surface is softer at ovulation. As the cervical glands release their fluids, the os of the cervix opens. This is clearly apparent to any woman who wishes to palpate the surface of her cervix. This can be checked conveniently at the same time as checking the fertile mucus, perhaps while having a shower. After ovulation, the cervix is once again lower in the vagina and quite easily palpated without the need to squat.

Maximising Chances of Pregnancy

- Ovulation Window is 2 days before and on day of temperature rise – assessed by BBT, fertile mucus & cervix position.
- Intercourse timing:
    - ‘normal’ sperm – 5 days pre temp rise to day after.
    - Sub-optimal sperm – 3 days pre temp rise to day after.
    - Semen takes 48 hours to recover to optimal levels, so intercourse alternate days during fertile period.

Optimising Micro Nutrition

	Optimal
DHEA	75 mg
PPQ	40-60mg
Carnitine	500mg x 2/day
Omega. 3	1g daily
***Vit D**	4000 iu
Magnesium	
Selenium & Iodine	
B12	
B complex	
***Folate**	1 mg/day
***Coenzyme Q10 (ubiquinol)**	300-600
Inositol	2-4g
Reservatrol	120-150mg/day
***Melatonin**	3-6mg nightly
N-Acetyl cysteine	500mg x 3/day
Vit E	400iu
Vit C	4g/ day
Iron	
Zinc	
Iodine	
***Arginine**	1 -2 g
DHA	
Alpha lipoid acid	
Vit A	

Avoiding Environmental Pollutants (Hormone Disruptors)

- Bisphenol A (BPA)
- Benzene & solvents
- Organophosphate pesticides
- Parabens
- PCB's
- Phthalates
- Lead etc etc

Book: *It Starts with the Egg*, Rebecca Fett, Franklin Fox ISBN 978-0-9996761-8-9

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