

FACTS

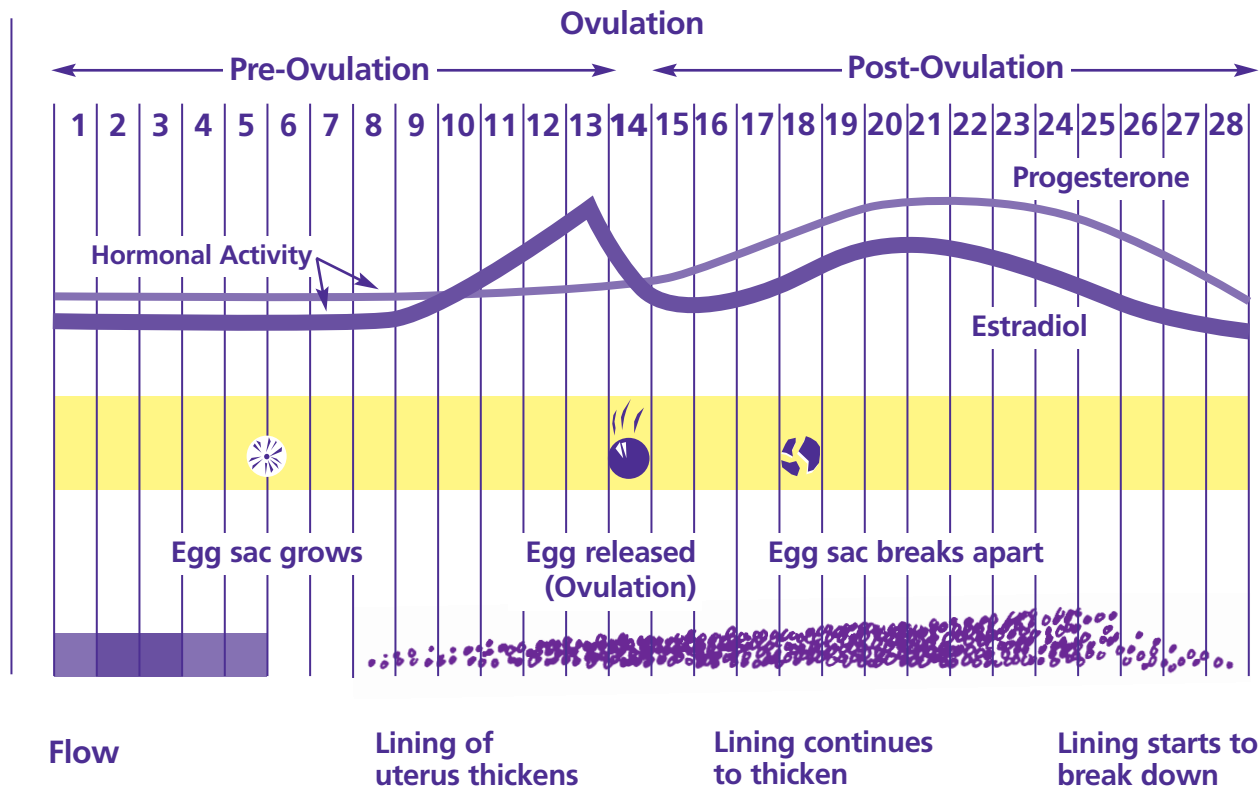
About

FERTILITY

Reproductive Health Technologies Project

The Ovulation Cycle

Typical Ovulation Cycle, With No Pregnancy



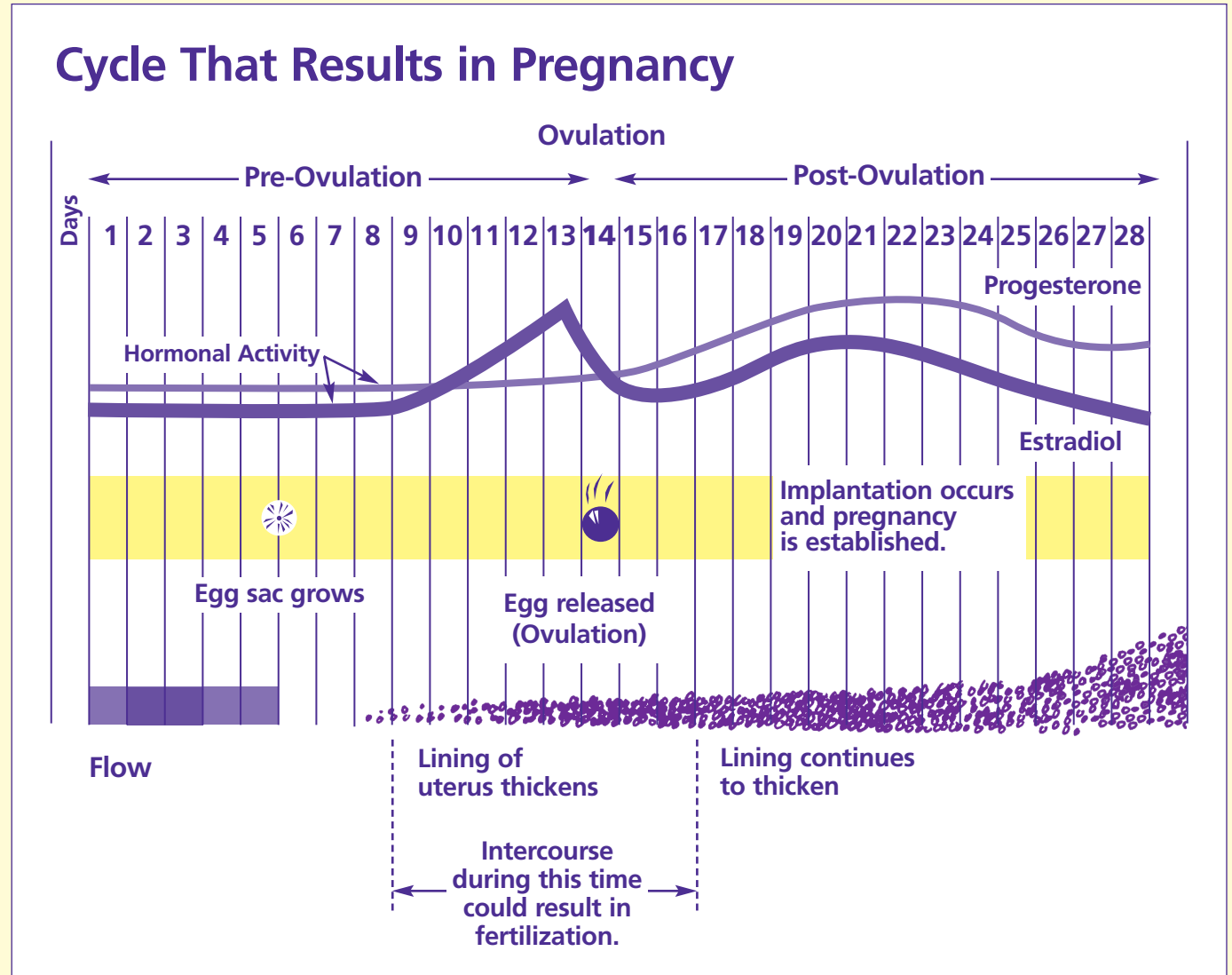
Sequence of major changes in a menstrual cycle that is typically 28 days long.

- There are over 60 million women aged 15-44 in the United States. Sixty-four percent of these women use contraception.
- A woman who wants to limit the size of her family will have to practice contraception for *at least* 20 years of her life if she remains sexually active throughout her reproductive years.
- The majority of unintended pregnancies among contraceptive users result from inconsistent or incorrect use.

Modified from graphic created by Planned Parenthood Federation of America, 1996.

The Pregnancy Cycle

- An egg is fertilized when it unites with sperm. Fertilization can only occur *after* ovulation.
- An egg retains potential for fertilization for 12 to 24 hours after its release, and sperm remain viable for approximately 72 hours.
- The risk of pregnancy is greatest in the six days leading up to, and including, the day of ovulation.
- A pregnancy is established when the fertilized egg implants into the lining of the uterus. This process takes about 5 to 8 days after fertilization.
- Pregnancy is usually recognized when a woman misses a menstrual period.
- Approximately 20-30% of all established and recognized pregnancies end in miscarriage. Many more established pregnancies end in miscarriage *before* a woman misses a menstrual period.



Modified from graphic created by Planned Parenthood Federation of America, 1996.

Preventing Pregnancy

METHODS OF ON-GOING USE INDEPENDENT OF SEXUAL INTERCOURSE

- Oral Contraceptives
- Intrauterine Devices (IUD)
- Injectables
- Implants
- Sterilization—for women and men

METHODS USED DURING SEXUAL INTERCOURSE

- Condoms—male and female
- Diaphragms
- Cervical Caps
- Vaginal Sponge
- Vaginal Film
- Spermicides

METHODS USED IMMEDIATELY OR SOON AFTER SEXUAL INTERCOURSE

- Emergency Contraceptive Pills (within 72 hours of unprotected sex)
- Emergency Insertion of IUD (within 5 days of unprotected sex)

PREVENTING SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS

In addition to preventing pregnancy, some of these methods also prevent STI transmission.

Methods vary in the amount of protection they provide against STIs. Abstinence and the male condom provide the most protection from STI transmission. The sponge, female condom, spermicides, diaphragms and cervical caps provide some protection from some STIs.

How Pregnancy Prevention Methods Work

PREVENTION OF PREGNANCY CAN BE ACHIEVED BY:

Avoiding intercourse.

- Abstinence

Placing a physical or chemical barrier between the sperm and egg.

- Condoms—male and female
- Diaphragm
- Cervical caps
- Vaginal sponge
- Vaginal film
- Spermicides
- Female sterilization
- Male sterilization

Altering the female hormonal environment.

- Oral contraceptives—combined and progestin only
- Injectables
- Implants
- Emergency contraceptive pills

Altering the uterine environment.

- Intrauterine devices (IUDs)

TIMING OF PREGNANCY PREVENTION

While the majority of these methods work by preventing fertilization, some methods, including combined oral contraceptive pills, progestin-only pills and the copper-releasing IUD, may also prevent pregnancy post-fertilization but pre-implantation.

The effectiveness of these methods vary based on the inherent efficacy of each method and correct and consistent use of the method by an individual woman or her partner.

Voluntary Pregnancy Termination

OPTIONS TO VOLUNTARILY END PREGNANCIES INCLUDE:

Non-surgical abortions

- Mifepristone used with misoprostol
- Methotrexate used with misoprostol
- Prostaglandins (also known as induction)

Surgical abortions

- Manual vacuum aspiration
- Electrical vacuum aspiration
- Dilation and curettage
- Dilation and evacuation
- Hysterotomy

HOW THESE METHODS WORK

Dilation and Curettage: Cervix is dilated, and the contents of the uterus are removed using forceps and a curette.

Dilation and Evacuation: Cervix is dilated, and forceps or a curette are used to remove the fetus. A suction cannula is used to remove the remaining tissue.

Electrical Vacuum Aspiration: Contents of the uterus are evacuated through a cannula by the suction action of an electrically powered aspirator.

Hysterotomy: Surgical procedure to remove the fetus through an incision in the uterus.

Manual Vacuum Aspiration: Contents of the uterus are evacuated through a cannula into a hand-held vacuum syringe.

Methotrexate used with misoprostol: Methotrexate is an antimetabolite and stops fetal cell growth. Misoprostol is a prostaglandin and causes uterine contractions that act to expel the embryo.

Mifepristone used with misoprostol: Mifepristone (originally known as RU-486) is an antiprogesterin and prevents progesterone from supporting the pregnancy. It is used in conjunction with misoprostol, which causes uterine contractions that act to expel the embryo.

Prostaglandins: Vaginally administered prostaglandins induce contractions which act to expel the embryo.

Timing of Abortion Methods

EARLY OPTIONS

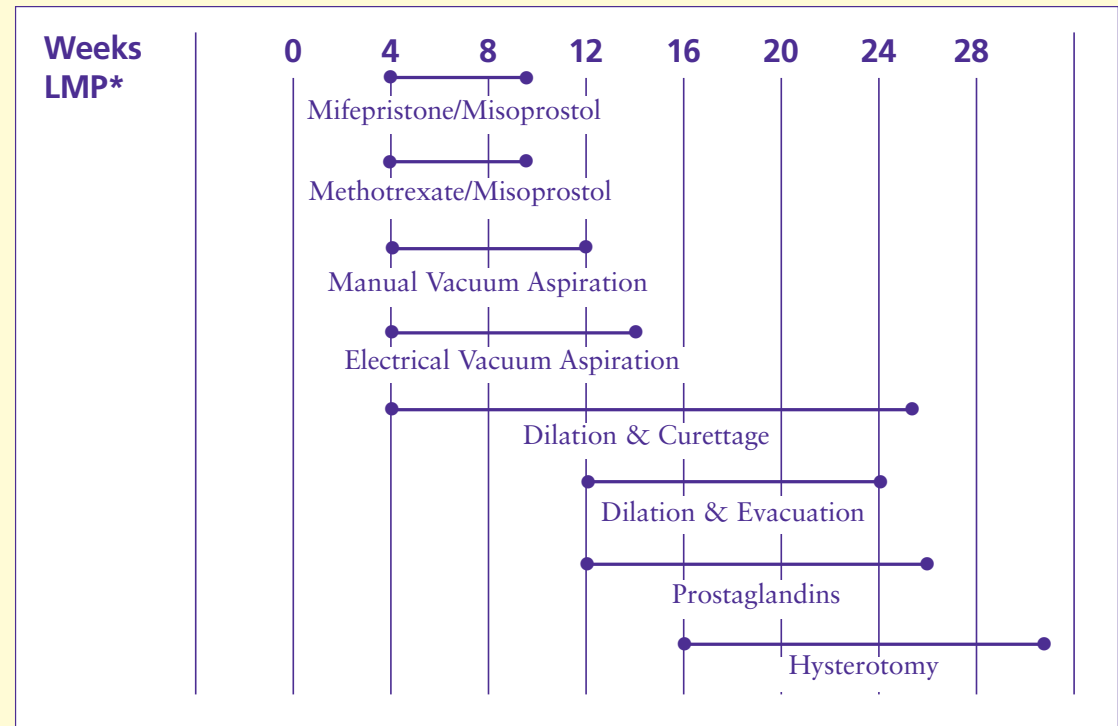
The following options are only used early in pregnancy:

Up to 7, 8, or 9 weeks LMP:*

- Mifepristone used with misoprostol
- Methotrexate used with misoprostol

Up to 12 to 14 weeks LMP:

- Manual Vacuum Aspiration
- Electrical Vacuum Aspiration



Modified from chart created by the Alan Guttmacher Institute 1999.

EARLY AND LATER OPTION

The following option can be used from 4 to 24 weeks LMP:

- Dilation and Curettage

LATER OPTIONS

The following options are typically used later in pregnancy:

12 or more weeks LMP:

- Dilation and Evacuation
- Prostaglandins
- Hysterotomy

*LMP: first day since last menstrual period

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WEB SITES OF INTEREST

The Alan Guttmacher Institute
www.agi-usa.org

Planned Parenthood Federation of America
www.plannedparenthood.org

American College of Obstetrics and Gynecologists
www.acog.org

Emergency Contraception Hotline
www.not-2-late.com

Consortium for Emergency Contraception
www.path.org/cec/

World Health Organization
www.who.org

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