



Teacher Training Curriculum Correspondence Course 2003, 2022



Glossary



WOOMB International Ltd

ADHESION A fibrous band of scar tissue joining internal body parts that aren't usually connected.

AMENORRHOEA The prolonged absence of menstrual periods.

ANOVULAR CYCLE A term used when ovulation does not occur before bleeding. Anovular bleeding.

ARTIFICIAL INSEMINATION The placing of sperm in the vagina by means other than sexual intercourse, with the aim of achieving pregnancy.

ASSISTED REPRODUCTIVE TECHNOLOGIES (ART) Any artificial or partly artificial procedures used to achieve pregnancy.

BARRIER CONTRACEPTION Any method of contraception designed to stop sperm entering the vagina, such as a condom or diaphragm.

BASAL BODY TEMPERATURE (BBT) The lowest normal body temperature recorded under conditions of absolute rest.

BASIC INFERTILE PATTERN (BIP) An unchanging pattern of sensation and/or discharge observed in the time after menstruation which indicates that the ovaries are inactive and oestrogen and progesterone levels are low.

BILLINGS METHOD A technique of natural fertility control in which times of infertility, possible fertility and maximum fertility are identified by a woman's observations of sensation and/or mucus at the vulva. Also known as the Billings Ovulation Method®

BREAKTHROUGH BLEED An episode of non-menstrual bleeding, caused by high levels of oestrogen either before ovulation or without ovulation taking place.

CAUTERISE To burn a body part to remove or seal it, so as to reduce possible medical harm.

CERVIX The narrow, lower part of the uterus (womb), which opens into the vagina. The cervix is usually 2 to 3 cm long (~1 inch) and roughly cylindrical in shape. The narrow, central cervical canal runs along its entire length, connecting the uterus and vagina. The opening into the uterus is called the internal os, and the opening into the vagina is called the external os. The lower part of the cervix, known as the vaginal portion of the cervix (or ectocervix), bulges into the top of the vagina.

CHROMOSOME One of the forty-six microscopic units within each cell, which carries the genetic material responsible for inherited characteristics.

CLIMACTERIC The menopausal years, during which reproductive function ceases. (Sometimes referred to as 'the change' or 'change of life'.)

COLOSTRUM The first, specialised form of breast milk produced by a mother after giving birth.

CONCEIVE To become pregnant.

CONCEPTION The fusion of sperm and egg.

CONDOM A sheath of rubber or plastic which is worn on the penis to prevent conception.

CORPUS LUTEUM A yellow structure formed in the ovary after the release of an egg. If the egg is fertilised, the corpus luteum grows and produces hormones that support the pregnancy for several weeks until the placenta takes over. In fertilisation does not take place, the corpus luteum degenerates.

CRYPTS, CERVICAL The cervix contains several hundred crypts (glands) lined by cells which, under hormonal and neural influence, manufacture mucus, which is released into the cervical canal. The crypts are differentiated into four types, G, L, S and P, which produce the four different types of mucus.

CYST Any sac-like structure containing fluid or semi-solid material.

DIAPHRAGM A dome-shaped rubber device worn over the cervix during sexual intercourse, to prevent conception.

DIATHERMY The use of electro-magnetic or ultrasound waves to heat body tissue below the surface, to cut or destroy infections or other disorders.

DOUCHE Water or another fluid flushed through the vagina, or the device used to do so.

EARLY DAY RULES The Billings Ovulation Method® guidelines used for achieving or avoiding a pregnancy from the beginning of the menstrual cycle to the Peak symptom.

ECTOPIC PREGNANCY A pregnancy that develops outside the uterus, usually in a fallopian tube.

EGG CELL (OVUM) A female reproductive cell which, when fertilised by a sperm cell, forms a new individual.

EJACULATION The discharge of semen (the fluid that contains sperm) from the penis.

EMBRYO The initial form of a developing baby.

ENDOMETRIOSIS A disorder in which tissue similar to the lining of the uterus (endometrium) grows outside the uterine cavity.

ENDOMETRIUM The inner lining of the uterus or womb.

ENDOCRINE SYSTEM The system of glands that release hormones into the bloodstream to manage many of the body's functions.

FALLOPIAN TUBES The two fine, muscular tubes leading from the ovaries to the uterus, along which sperm travel to meet an egg which has entered the tube after ovulation and along which an embryo then travels towards the uterus.

FERTILE DAYS The days of the menstrual cycle during which sexual intercourse may result in pregnancy.

FERTILISATION The union of an egg and a sperm.

FERTILITY The ability to reproduce.

FERTILITY DRUG Any medication designed to influence ovulation or sperm production and make pregnancy possible.

FIBROID A benign growth in the wall of the uterus.

FOETUS A developing baby from seven weeks to birth.

FOLLICLE A small fluid-filled structure within the ovary, which contains a developing egg. At ovulation, the egg is released when the follicle breaks through the surface of the ovary.

FOLLICLE STIMULATION HORMONE (FSH) A hormone produced by the pituitary gland, which stimulates the ovaries to produce maturing egg cells which secrete the hormone oestrogen.

GENETIC Relating to genes, the units via which characteristics are inherited.

GENITAL Relating to the external sex organs.

GENITAL CONTACT Contact between the penis and the vaginal opening or surrounding area, without penetration.

GONORRHOEA A highly contagious, sexually transmitted infection.

GYNAECOLOGICAL Relating to the health of the female reproductive system.

HORMONE A chemical substance produced within the body, which stimulates or affects other organs or body parts.

HOT FLUSH A sudden flushing of the skin accompanied by perspiration and a feeling of intense heat, a common symptom of menopause.

HYPOTHALAMUS A major control centre of the body, situated at the base of the brain, and interacting with the pituitary gland.

HYSTERECTOMY The surgical removal of the uterus and cervix.

IMPLANTATION The attaching of an embryo to the lining of the uterus, where it remains and develops during pregnancy.

IMPOTENCE An inability to have or maintain an erection of the penis that allows successful penetration of the vagina.

INFERTILITY Temporary or permanent inability to conceive or reproduce.

INTERCOURSE The insertion of a man's penis into a woman's vagina, with the release of semen.

IUD (INTERUTERINE DEVICE) Any device placed in the uterus for the purpose of avoiding conception.

LACTATION Breastfeeding

LAPAROSCOPY The technique of viewing the abdomen, particularly the reproductive organs, using an instrument like a thin telescope (a laparoscope) via a keyhole incision.

LIBIDO Sexual desire or drive.

LOCHIA A discharge from the uterus in the first few weeks after giving birth.

LUTEAL PHASE The time between ovulation and menstruation.

LUTEINISING HORMONE (LH) A hormone from the pituitary gland that stimulates ovulation.

MENARCHE The age at which endometrial bleeding begins.

MENOPAUSE The permanent cessation of the menstrual cycle and thus of fertility.

MENSTRUAL CYCLE The time interval from the beginning of one menstruation to the beginning of the next. During the cycle, ovulation occurs and the endometrium develops, regresses and is shed.

MENSTRUATION (also commonly called a 'period') An episode of bleeding from the uterus that usually occurs about eleven to sixteen days after ovulation if the released egg is not fertilised.

MENSES Another word for menstruation.

MUCUS, CERVICAL A discharge from the cells lining the G, L, S and P cervical crypts which varies according to your state of fertility.

OESTROGEN A hormone produced mainly in the ovaries, which is responsible for female sexual characteristics and plays an important role in ovulation.

OSTEOPOROSIS The loss from bones of calcium and other minerals as a result of which bones become thinner, brittle and weak.

OVARIAN To do with ovaries.

OVARY The female sex organ (generally occurring in pairs) in which egg cells mature and hormones are produced that influence the release of the egg.

OVULATION The release of an egg from an ovary.

OVULATION METHOD Original name of the Billings Method™ or Billings Ovulation Method®.

OVUM An egg cell.

OXYTOCIN The pituitary hormone responsible for the 'let-down' reflex that allows milk to flow from the breasts.

PEAK DAY The most fertile day of the menstrual cycle, which correlates closely with the time of ovulation and the last day of slipperiness or lubrication of the vulva (even if mucus is not visible).

PEAK RULE The guideline for applying the Billings Method™ at the time when the Peak symptom is identified.

PELVIC INFLAMMATORY DISEASE (PID) Any acute or chronic infection of the internal female reproductive organs, especially the fallopian tubes and/or ovaries.

PENETRATION The insertion of the penis into the vagina.

PITUITARY GLAND The gland at the base of the brain that produces many important hormones, including those essential for reproduction.

POCKETS OF SHAW On either side of the lower end of the vagina there are small pockets known as “Pockets of Shaw” and here the vagina extracts water from any material which is passing from the vagina, under the influence of progesterone during the Basic Infertile Pattern and the luteal phase.

POLYCYSTIC OVARIAN SYNDROME (PCOS) A condition in which the ovaries are studded with many small cysts, which may disturb hormone production and cause a range of symptoms including infrequent ovulation.

POLYP A small growth, shaped like a tear-drop, often found in the cervix or endometrium.

POST-COITAL (HUHNER’S) TEST Examination of the mucus shortly after intercourse at a time of peak fertility to determine the number and health of sperm and their potential for survival.

PROGESTERONE One of the two hormones produced by the corpus luteum as a result of ovulation. It changes the endometrium to support a pregnancy.

PROLACTIN A hormone from the pituitary gland, which stimulates breast-milk production.

PUBERTY The time of physical development in boys and girls as the result of hormonal changes, when their reproductive organs mature.

SEMEN The fluid ejected from a man’s penis at the peak of sexual stimulation. Sperm cells are carried in semen.

SPERM The male reproductive cells, whose quantity and health determine a man’s fertility. When sperm fuse with an egg, a new individual is formed.

SPERM SURVIVAL During the infertile phases of the cycle, sperm are kept out of the reproductive tract and the hostile environment of the vagina quickly incapacitates and destroys the sperm cells. Sperm survival is very short during times of infertility. When the cervix is open, sperm usually retain their fertilizing capacity for 3 days, but under optimal mucus conditions, occasionally for up to five days.

SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTION (STI) Any infection passed from one person to another during genital contact.

STERILISATION Any procedure that removes a man’s or woman’s ability to reproduce.

SWOLLEN VULVA The tissue softness of the vulva, often described as puffiness or swelling, is caused by lymphatic drainage close to ovulation.

TESTES (TESTICLES) Male sex organs in which sperm and the hormone testosterone are produced.

TUBAL To do with the fallopian tubes.

ULTRASOUND A diagnostic technique that uses extremely high-frequency sound waves to produce an image of internal body structures.

UTERUS (also commonly called the womb). The main female reproductive organ, which connects at one end with the vagina and at the other with the fallopian tube(s). It is here that an embryo develops.

VAGINA An internal female reproductive organ that forms a passageway between the uterus and the outside of the body.

VAGINISMUS A painful spasm or tightening of the vagina, which makes penetration by the penis painful or impossible.

VULVA The external female sex organs, including the opening of the vagina, which are protected by the folds of skin known as the labia. As any vaginal discharge passes the vulva, the woman senses its presence, enabling her to identify her patterns of fertility and infertility.

WITHDRAWAL Sexual intercourse in which the penis is withdrawn prior to ejaculation and semen discharged outside the vagina.

WITHDRAWAL BLEED Bleeding caused by lowered oestrogen without ovulation occurring. (Menstruation is caused by a withdrawal of oestrogen and progesterone).

WOMB The uterus.

ZYGOTE A fertilised egg, the embryo.