



The Marquette Model

What is the Marquette Model?

The Marquette Model (MM) is a natural and healthy fertility awareness based method (FABM) of family planning. It makes use of a woman's observations of her signs of fertility in order to identify her fertile and infertile times of her menstrual cycle. Couples can use the method to either achieve or avoid pregnancy. The MM can be used throughout the couple's reproductive years.

The Marquette Model uses an electronic fertility monitor, a device a woman uses at home to measure hormone levels in her urine to estimate the beginning and end of the fertile time in a woman's cycle. The information from the monitor can be used with observations of cervical fluid, basal body temperature, or other biological indicators of fertility.

How does the Marquette Model work?

The MM teaches a couple to use two or more markers to know when they are fertile. First, as with other FABMs, the Marquette Model teaches a woman to observe changes in her cervical fluid or mucus. Cervical fluid is produced in the woman's cervix, which is located internally at the opening to her uterus or womb. When a woman is fertile her cervical fluid will feel and look very different than when she is not fertile. If a woman learns to identify cervical fluid that is fertile, she will know when she can become pregnant.

Second, using a device called an electronic fertility monitor, a woman can measure hormone levels in her urine at home every day that indicate her level of fertility (how likely she is to become pregnant). Finally, a woman can observe changes in her basal body temperature (her waking temperature), or use specific formulas to determine her fertility.

Each of the above markers of fertility can be very helpful for a couple. The Marquette Model helps couples combine two or more signs of fertility so that they may have more confidence in understanding their times of fertility and infertility. With the Marquette Model couples can use any one of three combined approaches to estimate their time of fertility:

1. Electronic hormonal fertility monitor + fertility "formula."
2. Cervical fluid + fertility "formula"
3. Electronic hormonal fertility monitor + cervical fluid

By knowing their fertile time, couples can then choose to engage in or avoid sexual relations depending on their family planning goals.

How effective is the Marquette model in helping couples avoid or achieve pregnancy?

If a couple uses the Marquette model correctly, it is 98-99% effective for avoiding pregnancy (86%-93% effective with typical use).^{1,2} The MM works about as well as hormonal contraceptives, such as the Pill, and better than barrier contraceptives, such as condoms.³

The Marquette Model can also be used by couples trying to become pregnant. The ClearBlue Easy Fertility Monitor, one of the options for the Marquette Model, was actually designed to help couples achieve pregnancy. A study showed that using CEFM made it almost twice as likely that couples trying to conceive would be able to do so in two cycles compared to couples that didn't use it.⁴



To use the Marquette Model correctly, a couple needs to learn from a certified Marquette Model teacher, be clear about their family planning goals (achieving or avoiding pregnancy), and follow the guidelines for avoiding pregnancy.

What are some benefits of the Marquette Model?

The Marquette Model is a safe and effective method of family planning that can be used to avoid or achieve pregnancy. It teaches couples to understand their fertility and work with their bodies. The electronic hormonal fertility monitor is accurate and easy to use at home; however, there are expenses in the purchase of the monitor and the monitor test strips. Combining the fertility monitor along with cervical fluid monitoring is more complex but may help a couple be more confident with their family planning. The MM is also “reversible”- a couple can change their family planning goals whenever they wish. Also, research shows that couples who switch to a natural method of family planning improve their relationships, and feel more respected by their partners and more in control of their fertility.⁵

Can women who have irregular cycles or are breastfeeding use the Marquette Model?

The Marquette Model is for every woman and couple. It is especially helpful for women in special reproductive situations (irregular cycles, breastfeeding, pre-menopausal) because of the variety of ways that a woman can monitor her fertile time.

Couples can start learning the Marquette Model right away, because all the information they need to know is available online. They can also get support from a forum with nurses, doctors, and ethicists.

Where can I find more information on the Marquette model?

Marquette University, Institute for NFP

<http://nfp.marquette.edu>

(414) 288-3854

Sources

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2. Fehring, R., Schneider, M., Raviele, K, and Rodriguez, D. “Randomized Comparison of Two Internet-Supported Fertility Awareness Based Methods of Family Planning.” *Contraception* 88 (2013): 24-30.
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4. Robinson J. E., Wakelin M., and Ellis J. E. “Increased pregnancy rate with use of the ClearBlue Easy Fertility Monitor.” *Fertility and Sterility* 87 (2005): 329-34.
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