



The Creighton Model

What is the Creighton Model?

The Creighton Model (CrM) is a natural method of family planning based on a woman's observations of 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. A woman can use observations of her cervical fluid to identify the fertile and infertile times of her cycle. By observing these changes, couples can decide when to have sexual relations, depending on whether they are trying to achieve or avoid pregnancy.

How does the Creighton Model work?

During a woman's reproductive cycle, her body experiences many changes in her hormones that produce observable signs of fertility. Creighton Model practitioners teach couples how to observe and record the quality of the woman's cervical fluid in a standardized and systematic way. Based on this information, a couple will know when they are fertile and can choose whether or not to have sexual relations based on their family planning goals.

When a woman is fertile her cervical fluid becomes clear, stretchy and slippery. If fertile cervical fluid is present, sperm can survive in the woman's reproductive track and conception can occur for up to 6 days.¹ When ovulation occurs (the ovary releases an egg), the sperm can then join with the egg resulting in pregnancy. After ovulation occurs, the fertile cervical fluid will end and a woman will usually feel dry. If the woman has not become pregnant, she will typically get her period about two weeks later and her cycle will begin again.

Since the CrM has standardized observations and charting, women may share their charts with a Creighton trained medical consultant who can use this information to evaluate and potentially treat a variety of reproductive health problems, such as premenstrual syndrome, polycystic ovarian disease and infertility. The CrM physician is trained in Natural Procreative Technology or NaPro, a cooperative, ethical approach to the care of women's health problems. Rather than suppressing or disabling a woman's fertility or masking the symptoms of an abnormal cycle with artificial hormones, a woman can gather more information about her cycles through charting and work with a CrM physician to address these problems.

How effective is the Creighton Model in helping couples avoid or achieve pregnancy?

The Creighton Model can help a couple avoid pregnancy if the couple receives training from a certified instructor and they carefully follow the instructions provided. The Creighton Model is both a safe and effective natural method of family planning. It has a perfect use rate of 98.7-99.5%, and a typical use rate of 83-97%, as good as hormonal contraceptives (IUDs, the Pill, etc.) and better than barriers (condoms, etc.).^{2,3,4}

The Creighton Model allows couples to recognize when they are fertile and thus when they will most likely conceive successfully. A prospective study of fifty pregnancies in couples using the Creighton Model found that 76% of these couples were able to conceive in the first month that they switched from using the Creighton Model to avoid pregnancy. Ninety percent had conceived after the third month, and 100% after seven months.⁵

Another study of about 1,000 infertile couples having difficulty conceiving found NaPro technology was successful in identifying the underlying cause of infertility and the live birth rate was 52.8 per 100 couples.⁶

What are some benefits of the Creighton Model?

The Creighton Model is an effective method of family planning for couples trying to avoid or achieve pregnancy. There are no devices or drugs to use that harm the body or a couple's fertility. CrM is safe, healthy ("organic") and



inexpensive. It teaches couples to understand their bodies and their combined fertility. The CrM is “reversible”—a couple can change their family planning goals whenever they wish. And, 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.⁷

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

Women who have irregular sleep schedules can use the Creighton Model as it does not require the measurement of basal body temperatures. They can also use it if they are breastfeeding, or have just stopped using hormonal methods. All women can use the Creighton Model to help monitor their reproductive health and this information can be used with NaPro Technology.

Where can I find more information on the Creighton Model?

To find a center to learn: <http://www.fertilitycare.org/>

More information on the method: www.CreightonModel.com

Sources

1. Wilcox A. J., Weinberg C. R., Baird D. B. “Timing of Sexual Intercourse in relation to ovulation.” *New England Journal of Medicine* 333 (1995): 1517-1521.
2. Hilgers T. W., Stanford J. B. “Creighton Model NaProEducation Technology for avoiding pregnancy. Use effectiveness.” *Journal of Reproductive Medicine* 43 (1998): 495-502.
3. Howard M. P., Stanford J. B. “Pregnancy probabilities during use of the Creighton Model of FertilityCare™ System.” *Archives of Family Medicine* 8 (1999): 391-402.
4. Trussell, J. “Contraceptive failure in the United States.” *Contraception* 83 (2011): 397-404.
5. Hilgers T. W., Daly K. D., Prebil A. M., Hilgers S.K. “Cumulative pregnancy rates in patients with apparently normal fertility and fertility-focused intercourse.” *Journal of Reproductive Medicine* 37 (1992): 864-866.
6. Stanford J. B., Parnell T. A., Boyle P. C. “Outcomes from treatment of infertility with natural procreative technology in an Irish general practice.” *Journal of the American Board of Family Medicine* 21 (2008): 375-384.
7. VandeVusse L., Hanson L., Fehring R. J., Newman A., Fox J. “Couples' views of the effects of natural family planning on marital dynamics.” *Journal of Nursing Scholarship* 35 (2003): 171-176.