

Charting Your Basal Body Temperature

In Chinese Medicine, the approach to treating fertility is to get the woman's cycle as close to 'normal' as possible. The characteristics of a 'normal' cycle are:

1. The cycle lasts 28 days with ovulation occurring on day 14
2. There is no clotting, cramping, spotting or pain
3. The cycle is consistently bi-phasic with predictable basal body temperatures (BBT)

Charting your BBT is an excellent way for us to track our progress. If we see that your cycle is becoming more regular, we know that the treatment is working for you. Your BBT is also helpful when timing intercourse, determining when you will ovulate, and understanding from a Chinese medicine perspective what is happening in your body.

Here's how to chart your BBT:

1. Use a digital *basal body thermometer*, which is different from a regular thermometer.
2. Print out a BBT chart from website or use "fertility friend" app.
3. Keep your thermometer right by your bed within arm's reach.
4. Take your temperature first thing in the morning at the same time each day *BEFORE YOU GET OUT OF BED or do anything else*, including stretching or speaking. And, do so within 30 minutes of waking up, if possible. It is important to take your temp at about the same time every morning, as your core temperature will rise and fall depending on the time of day.
5. You may choose to take your temperature orally, vaginally, or rectally; just be sure to use one method consistently. Using the same method every day will help ensure an accurate reading.
6. It is best to take your temperature after at least five hours of sleep.
7. Cycle Day 1 is always the first day of your period, and even if it is a light flow, start a new chart on Cycle Day 1. You may begin charting at anytime; just be sure to mark your temperature on the appropriate cycle day on your first chart.
8. Chart your temperature by finding the appropriate day of your cycle on the bottom of the chart, then follow the column up and fill in the box that indicates your reading for that day. Most digital BBT thermometers will store your most recent reading so you can fill in your chart at a convenient time later in the day.
9. As your cycle progresses, you can connect the dots on your chart.
10. Don't worry if you miss a day or sleep in. Just make a note on the back of your chart, and the next morning pick up where you left off.
11. On the appropriate cycle days, it will be helpful to make a note of your cervical mucus, using 'm' and when you have intercourse, using 'x'. Use the back of your chart for any special notes about the quality of your mucus (e.g. stretchy, creamy, etc.) and any PMS symptoms or other details you would like to bring up at your next appointment.