

Fertility Awareness-Based Methods (FABM) – CON 16

Natural Family Planning (NFP)

DEFINITION

Use physical signs/ symptoms, like body temperature and cervical secretion, and/or tracking cycle data to identify the “fertile window” or the days in each menstrual cycle when intercourse is most likely to result in pregnancy. When couples use NFP, they must abstain from having intercourse during the at-risk fertile days. With FABM, couples have to use another method such as barriers or avoid penile-vaginal intercourse completely during those days to avoid pregnancy. Fertility awareness can also help a client achieve pregnancy, when desired. Efficacy is based on the couple’s ability to accurately identify the fertile window to aid in achieving or avoiding pregnancy.

SUBJECTIVE

Should include:

1. LMP
2. May report conditions that make NFP/FABM more difficult to use such as recent childbirth, current breastfeeding, recent menarche, recent discontinuation of hormonal contraceptive methods, approaching menopause, and anovulatory/irregular cycling or frequent vaginitis or reproductive infections
3. Medical, sexual, and contraceptive history update, as appropriate

May include:

1. Desire to use natural methods
2. Contraindications to hormonal or mechanical methods of birth control
3. Highly motivated couples willing to commit to abstinence or to use barrier method during fertile periods

OBJECTIVE

May include:

1. Age-appropriate physical exam within the past 12 months
2. Height, weight, blood pressure and BMI

LABORATORY

May include:

1. Age-appropriate Pap smear screening
2. Negative urine pregnancy test
3. Vaginitis/cervicitis screening, as indicated (STI’s, PID, or vaginal infection may affect fertility signs)

ASSESSMENT

Client is a candidate for natural family planning and/or fertility awareness-combined method

PLAN

1. Provide education and information on the availability of emergency contraception when initiating method.
2. Provide detailed information on types of fertility awareness method(s), which include methods based on tracking days of menstrual cycle (e.g Standard Days Method); methods based on observation of cervical secretions (e.g. Two Day and Billings Ovulation Method) ; methods based on tracking BBT (e.g. Natural Cycles Method); methods tracking multiple indicators of fertility (e.g. sympto-thermal methods); methods based on urinary hormone monitoring (e.g. The Marquette Model) and FABM Apps and devices.
3. Referrals, as indicated to local resources for education and training

CLIENT EDUCATION

Effective Date: December 2024

Last Reviewed: November 2024

Next Scheduled Review: November 2025

1. Provide clients with recommendations on resources for fertility awareness. References for websites and phone apps are on FABM instruction sheet.
2. Review safer sex education and inform that NFP and FABM do NOT protect against STI's/HIV.
3. Recommend that client return to clinic annually and PRN for problems.

CONSULT / REFER TO PHYSICIAN

1. Infertility concerns

REFERENCES

1. Urrutia, R. & Polis, C. (2025). Fertility awareness-based methods. In R. A. Hatcher, P. Cason, C. Cwiak, A. Edelman, D. Kowal, J. M. Marrazzo, ... M. S. Policar (Eds.), *Contraceptive technology* (pp. 451- 475). (22nd ed.). Jones & Bartlett Learning.
2. U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. (n.d.) *Understanding fertility: The basics*. Retrieved from <https://opa.hhs.gov/reproductive-health/understanding-fertility-basics>
3. Reproductive Health National Training Center. (2018). Understanding and counseling potential users on fertility awareness-based methods for pregnancy prevention webinar. Retrieved from <https://rhntc.org/resources/understanding-and-counseling-potential-users-fertility-awareness-based-methods-pregnancy>
4. Reproductive Health National Training Center. (2021). Fertility awareness-based methods: Fertility indicator concepts and counseling points job aid. Retrieved from <https://rhntc.org/resources/fertility-awareness-based-methods-fertility-indicator-concepts-and-counseling-points-job>