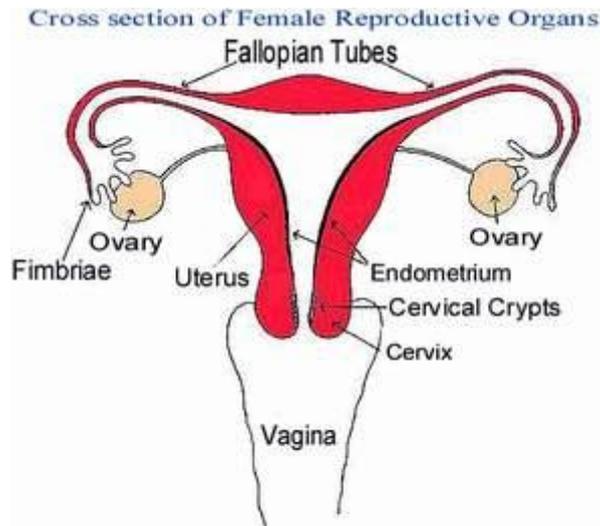


## Cervical Mucus

Cervical Mucus is one of the most important indicators of fertility because it changes throughout the menstrual cycle from being dry, thick or pasty (infertile) to being wet and slippery (fertile).

**It is these changes that will warn you of approaching fertility.**



**Cervical mucus acts like a STOP / GO signal or barrier for incoming sperm.**

Your cervical mucus will either stop sperm or allow sperm through to fertilise one of your eggs. It all depends on the state of your mucus at any given time.

When observing mucus, ask yourself the question "Could a sperm swim through this type of mucus?" It will help you to decide if you are fertile or not. Mucus that is dry and thick is not as easy for sperm to swim through as mucus that is wet and slippery.

Getting to know your body and its types of mucus is a very important step for your fertility.

Different women have different symptoms or characteristics of mucus such as:

- Wetness
- Colour
- Smell
- Pastiness
- Texture

So it is only by knowing your own personal pattern that you can determine your fertility status. This is where your use of a good charting system becomes vital. By observing and keeping a record of your mucus changes, moods and other symptoms over a few months you will get a very clear picture of what your body does during your menstrual cycle. This can be done easily through using a computer program, app or by keeping a paper based chart.

For some women the changes are not so distinct - they do not ever get really wet profuse mucus but they do see a change. This is why it is so important to take the time to learn the signals your body gives you - it might not be the same as someone else's or what you have read in a book.

By keeping a good detailed chart you will recognise its rhythm and have a much better idea of when is a good time to try to conceive.

Observing mucus is simple. You are only interested in the mucus that is readily observable at the mouth of the vagina. You need only touch the mouth of the vagina, the outside of the opening (no need to touch inside), or alternatively wipe the vaginal mouth with a tissue and feel mucus from that.

**Dry or no mucus = Non-fertile**

**Wet, profuse and slippery mucus = Fertile**

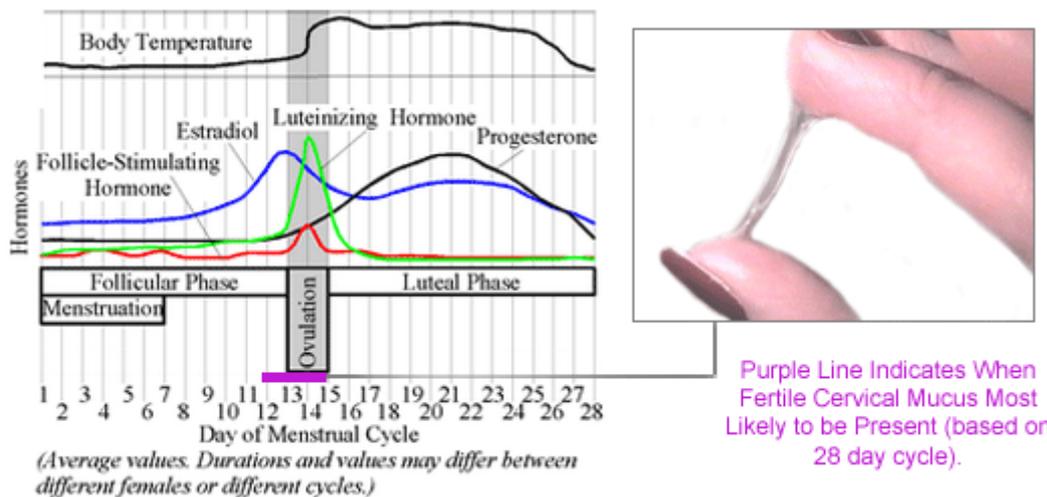
The changes from dry to wet indicate that your fertile phase is coming so this is the time to try for that baby. Sperm can live for up to 3 days in fertile mucus, therefore it is important to time intercourse so it occurs a day (or closer) before ovulation unless of course you are using gender selection methods. This means that sperm is not too tired by the time the egg is ready.

After ovulation (your fertile peak) has occurred, mucus will dry out again and return to its non fertile state.

Factors like the presence of sperm, vaginal infections, cysts, drugs and so forth can affect mucus production or in the case of sperm, mask the presence of mucus. So remember to write down any illness, and frequency of intercourse so your records are accurate.

Cervical mucus is needed by the body to help facilitate sperm transport to the egg. In order for conception to occur sperm must swim through the cervix and uterus and ultimately to the fallopian tube where fertilization occurs.

Without fertile cervical mucus, it becomes very hard for sperm to reach the egg.



Your cervical mucus constantly changes throughout your cycle, increasing in quantity and becoming clear and stretchy as you approach ovulation and fertile mucus is produced. Noticing and recording these changes will help you better time intercourse and recognize your own fertility pattern.

In most women, the cervical mucus starts out dry after menstruation and then gets sticky, then creamy, then wet and watery, becoming like egg whites as you get closer to ovulation. You may even get different types of cervical mucus throughout the day.

Fertile cervical mucus is a sign that your body is most fertile; having intercourse when you are most fertile will increase your chances of pregnancy.

## How to Check Your Cervical Mucus

To check your cervical mucus follow the following steps:

- Insert two clean fingers in your vagina until you can feel your cervix
- One finger should be on each side of the cervix
- Press gently against your cervix
- Collect the fluid by moving your fingers to the opening of the cervix
- Remove your fingers and pull them apart slowly
- Make your observations in a daily journal

**TIP:** Avoid checking your cervical mucus just before or after intercourse as arousal and seminal fluids will skew your observations.

## Recording Your Cervical Mucus Patterns

Make sure you track your cervical mucus every single day for at least 3 months when trying to get pregnant. Once you get used to recognizing your fertile cervical mucus you will be able to track your most fertile days and increase your chances of conception.

Below are common types of cervical mucus. Not everyone experiences every type of cervical mucus. You may also have some cervical mucus that does not seem to “fit” perfectly into any category. In this case, record it in the most fertile category that best seems to fit.

**Dry:** Record “dry” if you have no cervical mucus present. If the outside of your vaginal feels dry and you have no cervical mucus. You may most likely experience dryness before ovulation after your period and after ovulation.

**Sticky:** Record “sticky” if your cervical mucus is glue-like, gummy, stiff or crumbly, breaks easily and quickly and if it is not easily stretched. It will probably be yellowish or white, but could also be cloudy/clear.

**Creamy:** Creamy cervical mucus is close to hand lotion. It can be white or yellow or cloudy/clear, like milk or cream, mayonnaise or like a flour/water solution. It may stretch slightly and break easily.

**Watery:** “Watery” cervical mucus is clear and most resembles water. It may be stretchy also. This cervical mucus is considered fertile and this may be your most fertile cervical mucus or you may get it before you get egg white cervical mucus or you may not get this type of fluid at all.

**Egg white:** This is your most fertile cervical mucus. Record “egg white” if your cervical mucus looks at all like egg whites. It should be stretchy and clear, or clear tinged with white, or even clear tinged with pink. It also resembles semen (and has a lot of the same physical properties to allow the sperm to travel and be nourished). You should be able to stretch it between your thumb and index finger.

## Factors that Can Influence Your Cervical Mucus

Certain factors may influence the quality and quantity of cervical mucus that you produce and therefore affect your chances of pregnancy. Some factors may be a result of hormonal factors, while others may be related to lifestyle or medications. If any of these applies to your case, make sure to record it in your notes so that you can recognize why a particular entry may seem unusual or different.

The following factors may impact cervical mucus patterns and should be noted when possible:

- Medications such as antihistamines and diuretics
- Fertility drugs such as Clomid
- Tranquilizers
- Antibiotics

- Vaginal infection or STD (ask your doctor if you think this is a possibility)
- Illness
- Delayed ovulation
- Douching (not recommended unless advised by your doctor)
- Obesity
- Poor diet and poor health in general
- Commercial lubricants (not recommended when trying to conceive as they are hostile to sperm)
- Decreased ovarian function
- Just stopping birth control pills

If you notice anything that concerns you about your cervical mucus (like if it is smelly or is causing you discomfort or itchiness or if you are bleeding or spotting when you do not expect to), call your doctor.