



SIX FISHES

CHINESE MEDICINE FOR ALL

HOW TO CHART YOUR BASAL BODY TEMPERATURE

Did you know that your temperature, first thing in the morning changes depending on what cycle day you're on? Your temperature, first thing in the morning is called your Basal Body Temperature (BBT) At Six Fishes, we work with many women and men for infertility. We like to work with woman's BBT charts for several reasons:

- Sometimes, couples have sex (or get inseminated) on the wrong day of their cycle. Charting helps get the math right.
- You might not be ovulating. We'll learn that from your chart. Or maybe it's early. Or late.
- Your BBT might be too low: and sometimes this indicates low thyroid function. We'll want to correct that right away.

Working with BBT charts helps us to be more accurate when we diagnosis the root cause of your infertility and when we prescribe your herbal formula.

These changes in temperature (and cervical mucus!) throughout the menstrual cycle gives us the information we need to customize your treatment plan. We're happy to treat you without it, but we feel that knowing your temperature is like a window into your body. It helps us to zero in on some of the root imbalances.

Charting your BBT is simple. All you need to do is take your temperature first thing every morning and mark it on a chart that looks like graph paper. Nowadays, most women use apps on their smartphones.

If you prefer paper, we've got a downloadable PDF for you. Bring in your chart to your appointment so we can look at it together.

Start by purchasing a Basal thermometer online or at the drugstore.

1. **Take your temperature first thing in the morning;** before you get out of bed or even speak. Leave your thermometer at your bedside within easy reach, so you don't have to move much to get it. If you use a glass thermometer, make sure you shake it down before going to bed.
2. **Take your temperature as close to the same time.** Set the alarm if you need to. Keep consistent and take your temperature within a half-hour because your temperature can vary as the clock ticks. (if you usually take your temperature at 6 a.m., it is OK to take your BBT between 5:30-6:30, but the closer to 6 the better. The normal variation is up to .2 degrees per hour. It will be lower if you take your temperature early and higher if you take it later on.

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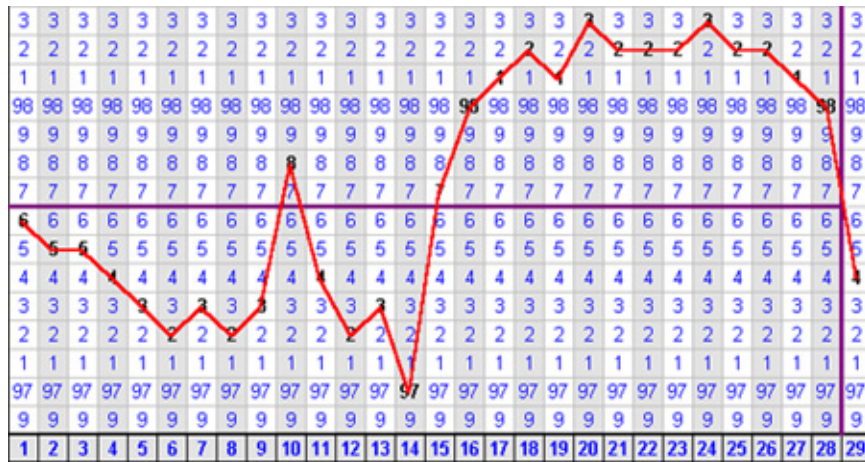


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3. **Get at least 5 hours of Sleep:** It's most accurate when then. At the very least, have 3 hours uninterrupted sleep.
4. **Take your temperature orally, vaginally, or rectally.** Stay with the same method for the entire cycle.
5. **Place the thermometer the same way each day** (same location of your mouth, same depth vaginally and rectally).
6. **Chart your temperature each day.** Try not to read too much into it until the cycle is complete.
7. **You might see a temperature drop when you ovulate.** If you see this drop, it is a good idea to have sex in case you are ovulating.
8. **You are looking for is to see a shift of at least .4 degrees Fahrenheit after ovulation.** This rise in temperature means that your chart is *biphasic*: so your temperature before ovulation is lower, and after ovulation, it's higher. Lots of women also use ovulation tests in conjunction with charting to give them a well-rounded sense of when they're most fertile. This shift should be above the highest temperature in the previous six days. There's usually one day when temps are more elevated. Just ignore it. You probably overslept or had a fever.

Here's an example: On Day 10, the temperature jumps to 97.8 and then drops down again. We'll assume it's an anomaly. We can ignore this day.





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10. **After your temperature rises for at least three days**, or at the end of your cycle, you can draw a line between your follicular phase and luteal phase temperatures. With luck, it is easy to see a clear rise between the highest part of your follicular phase and draw your line between the highest follicular phase and the lowest part of the luteal phase. IF there's a difference, you know that your chart is biphasic.

11. **Review the graph at the end of the month** to analyze what happened. Chart for a few months and look for patterns.

13. **If your temperature stays up for 18 days or more after ovulation**, you should test for pregnancy.

For women who have irregular cycles; the most significant variation from cycle to cycle should be in the first half of the cycle. **The luteal phase should be relatively constant** (within 1-2 days). So if one has a cycle that ranges from 28-34 days, and a luteal phase of 14 days, ovulation would occur somewhere between days 14-20 -- not the middle of a cycle, not day 14.

For women with long cycles, this is the biggest mistake and the most easily corrected. If you pinpoint ovulation, conception often happens quickly.

Charting Cervical Mucus

The texture of cervical mucus also changes when you ovulate.

If you want a clearer picture of your cycle, it is best to combine charting your BBT along with observations of cervical mucus (CM).

There are a few ways to check your mucus. Find the approach that is best for you.

You can examine your toilet tissue after wiping. There might be more mucus after you have a bowel movement. Another way is to insert two fingers and gently take a little pinch of mucus from the cervix.

Mucus varies from dry to sticky, to creamy, to egg-white before ovulation in most women.

When you are not ovulating, CM can be dry or sticky.

Close to ovulation, it turns creamy and right before ovulation it should have a raw egg-white texture. It's precisely the same as egg whites!

After ovulation, it's normal for CM to become dryer again.

Now you have it! You'll know more about your body and fertility just by learning the signs!

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