

# How long does it take to learn NFP and to achieve autonomy?

## **Does it take long to learn Natural Family Planning and to achieve Autonomy?**

Natural family planning is an educational rather than a technological approach to fertility regulation. After charting for three cycles using the 'symptothermal method of natural family planning', most women will be confident in their observations and will become autonomous, irrespective of educational background.

## **What does autonomous mean?**

Client autonomy means that the couple have learned natural family planning and they are now self-reliant in applying it; this achievement of autonomy will depend largely on their motivation and mutual support.<sup>1</sup> The autonomous natural family planning client will :

- correctly observe and chart the daily signs of fertility.
- understand and recognize the fertile and infertile days of her cycle.
- will adjust sexual behavior to correspond with family planning intention, i.e. will use periodic abstinence if pregnancy is not desired.
- express satisfaction with the method.<sup>4</sup>

The couple can always contact the natural family planning teacher if they have a query e.g. if there is a change in their situation as after the birth of a child, or during the pre-menopause.

The **World Health Organization** field trial of the 'Ovulation Method' of natural family planning found that 90% of women were able to distinguish their mucus pattern during the first cycle. Most women are **proficient by the 3rd cycle** unless they are discontinuing anovulant medication or lactating. After three to six cycles have been experienced the onset of the fertile phase and 'peak day' are easily recognized by most clients.<sup>2,3</sup>

## **References:**

1. Klaus, Hanna; 'Natural family planning – Is it scientific? Is it effective?' see page 15; Newman Lecture Series 1; May 21, 2000. (online)
2. Klaus, H ; Natural Family Planning : A Review 2nd Edition. July 1995, page 12,13; NFP Center of Washington, D.C. Inc., 8514 Bradmoor Drive, Bethesda, MD 20817-3810.
3. World Health Organization; 'A prospective multi-centre trial of the Ovulation Method of Natural Family Planning 1; The Teaching Phase'; Fertility & Sterility; Vol. 36, no 2, Aug 1981; p152-158.
4. Kambic RT, Martin MC; 'Evaluating client autonomy in natural family

planning" Adv. Contracept. 4 (1988) 221-231

To be most effective, the woman must be taught the Symptothermal Double-Check Method of Natural Family Planning by a qualified natural family planning teacher.