

Fertility indicators and menopausal transition

The fertility indicators and pre-menopause:

- (Cervical Mucus, Temperature (BBT), Palpation of the Cervix)

Cervical mucus and pre-menopause:

Cervical mucus as a fertility indicator is **less clear** in pre-menopause **as**:

- The normal oestrogenic **build-up to peak** mucus may not occur due to anovulatory cycles.
- Even in the ovulatory cycle, mucus is not always discernible as **fertile-type mucus** is scant and occasionally absent making the mucus an unreliable symptom. [Parameters are used to assess the Mucus Symptom?](#)
- With natural aging of the cervix the **S crypts** decline in number so that the quantity and the duration of the more-fertile mucus symptom is diminished. The S mucus may occur for one day or part of a day during the fertile phase and the woman may miss this symptom altogether.
- The area in the vulva sensitive to the presence of mucus is also diminished making it more difficult to appreciate the mucus symptom.

Palpation of the cervix and pre-menopause:

The **changes** in the cervix itself are more objective and a **more reliable fertility indicator** in the pre-menopausal years.¹

Temperature (BBT) and pre-menopause:

The **thermal shift** is the **only positive sign of ovulation** and of the definitively infertile phase of the cycle in **pre-menopause**. Therefore it is important to record temperature **every day** during the pre-menopause so that delayed ovulation and also the very early ovulation can be detected.

Special RULES apply in the pre-menopause situation in the symptothermal double-check method of natural family planning, and the woman must be taught these rules by a qualified NFP teacher.

References:

1. Flynn A, Brooks M; 'The Manual of Natural Family Planning'; pages 74-80; 1996; ISBN 0 7225 3115 X