



# NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING



## WHAT IS NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING?

NFP is an umbrella term for certain methods used to achieve and avoid pregnancies. These methods are based on observation of the naturally occurring signs and symptoms of the fertile and infertile phases of a woman's menstrual cycle. No drugs, devices, or surgical procedures are used to avoid pregnancy.

## IS NFP RHYTHM?

No is not! The rhythm (or calendar) method was in use in prior generations. It was based on the theory that the time of ovulation could be determined by calculating from previous menstrual cycles. This method often proved inaccurate because of the unique nature of each woman's ovulation cycle. NFP methods are progressive. That is, they are based on progressive, day-to-day observations of the naturally occurring signs and symptoms of fertile and infertile phases of the menstrual cycle.

## WHO CAN USE NFP?

Any married couple can use NFP! A woman need not have "regular" cycles. NFP education helps couples to fully understand their combined fertility, thereby helping them to either achieve or avoid a pregnancy. The key to the successful use of NFP is cooperation and communication between husband and wife—a shared commitment.

## WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF FERTILITY?

A woman's body provides three basic ways to identify the fertile and infertile times of her cycle. Recognizing the pattern of those physical signs forms the basis for all methods of NFP. A primary sign of fertility is the mucus released from the woman's cervix. A woman learns to identify the normal, healthy, cervical mucus which indicates the days that intercourse is most likely to result in a pregnancy. The second sign is her basal body temperature. Due to hormonal activity, a woman's resting temperature changes during the menstrual cycle. Lower temperatures indicate that ovulation has not yet occurred. Higher temperatures indicate a rise in progesterone which signals the end of the fertile time. The third sign is a change in the shape or texture of the cervix. Finally secondary signs, such as a minor abdominal pain or pressure at the time of ovulation can also be observed.

## HOW DOES NFP WORK?

NFP instruction helps a couple identify the most opportune time to achieve as well as avoid a pregnancy. Understanding the intercourse or genital contact during the fertile time can result in pregnancy, couples using the natural methods must be clear regarding their family planning intention—that is, do they wish to achieve or avoid a pregnancy? If a couple wishes to achieve pregnancy, they have intercourse during the fertile time. If a couple wishes to avoid pregnancy, they abstain from intercourse and any genital contact during the fertile time. No artificial methods are used during the fertile time. These would interfere with a woman's observation of their fertility signs.

## FAMILY LIFE MINISTRY


2403 Holcombe Blvd.

Houston, Texas 77021

Phone: 713-741-8730

Fax: 713-741-8775

[www.familylifehouston.org](http://www.familylifehouston.org)





# NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING



## WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF USING NFP?


In NFP both spouses are taught to understand the nature of fertility and work with it, either to plan a pregnancy or to avoid a pregnancy. Couples who use NFP soon learn that they have a shared responsibility for family planning. Husbands are encouraged to “tune into” their wives’ cycles and both spouses are encouraged to speak openly and frankly about their sexual desires and their ideas on family size.

## HOW EFFECTIVE ARE THE METHODS OF NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING FOR AVOIDING PREGNANCY?

When couples are taught by competent teachers, understand the methods, and are motivated to follow them, NFP is up to 99% successful in spacing or limiting births. The effectiveness of NFP depends upon the spouses’ following the rules of the method according to their family planning intention (i.e., achieving or limiting births). Those who are strongly motivated to avoid pregnancy and follow the method strictly are very effective in meeting their goal.

## WHERE CAN I LEARN HOW TO USE NFP?

The best way to learn NFP is from a qualified instructor-that is, one who is certified from an NFP teacher education program. Although medical professionals are gradually learning more about NFP and becoming more supportive of patients who wish to use it, they are not often trained to teach NFP. To find an NFP teacher near you, contact: Office of Family Life Ministry . Attn. Joe DeVet, NFP Coordinator. Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, 2401 Holcombe Blvd. Houston, Texas 77021-2023. Tel (713) 683-8544 Fax (713) 741-8775 E-mail address: [nfpflm@aol.com](mailto:nfpflm@aol.com) or Visit our website at [www.familylifehouston.org](http://www.familylifehouston.org) to check for the informational meeting dates or more information.



**FAMILY LIFE MINISTRY**  
2403 Holcombe Blvd.  
Houston, Texas 77021  
Phone: 713-741-8730  
Fax: 713-741-8775  
[www.familylifehouston.org](http://www.familylifehouston.org)

