

Save the Date

NFP
Conference
at
Sacred
Heart
Major
Seminary
Tuesday,
1-5 PM
July 20, 2010

Speakers include:
 Dr. Janet Smith,
 Fr. Jeffrey Day
 Dr. Daniel Greene, OB/GYN,
 and witness couples.
 There are six workshops
 in the plans addressing
 doctors, nurses, priests,
 educators, marriage
 preparation facilitators
 and parents.

The fee is \$20 single
 and \$30 couple.
 Scholarships available.

Invite doctors, nurses,
 priests, deacons, parents,
 teachers, friends, and
 neighbors to attend the
 conference with you.

NFP: Current Research

The Breastfeeding Transition



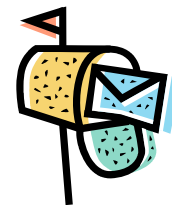
The time between the birth of a child and the start of ovulation (the breastfeeding transition) is a challenging one when trying to prevent pregnancy. The USCCB's NFP newsletter, *Current Medical Research*, reviews an article on the efficacy of NFP during the breastfeeding transition. Here are some difficulties couples face when trying to use NFP during this time

"1) there are no menstrual markers in the pre-menstrual phases, 2) the traditional markers of fertility (i.e., cervical mucus and basal body temperature changes) do not always coincide with hormonal indicators of fertility,

3) women often ovulate before their first menses, 4) hormonal indicators are in disassociation with follicular development, 5) the first three to six menstrual cycles are very irregular in length and time of ovulation."

There are relatively few reports on how effective NFP is during the breastfeeding transition. However, those that have been published have found higher unintended pregnancy rates in those couples using NFP during this time period. Some of these studies have hypothesized that this is due to a dissociation of the fertility symptoms from when a woman is actually fertile.

In other words, some of the symptoms that couples use to observe changes in the woman's fertility (e.g. cervical mucus and BBT) do not correlate with the hormonal changes that cause a woman to ovulate. Obviously, this poses a problem for couples wishing to delay pregnancy. (continued p.2)



TLC Mail

Dear TLC,

My mother-in-law made the same comment about the Rhythm method to me and my husband that was in the TLC newsletter. We were both surprised that she mentioned family planning at all, much less the extremely out-dated Rhythm Method, but we ended up ignoring the comment. We're sure she'll be happy with more than less grandchildren anyway, right? :)

K.M.



NFP: Current Research

(continued from p. 1)

Thus, the USCCB's article reminds couples of the rules to follow during breastfeeding transition.

First, a couple should begin charting as soon as lochia (post-partum bleeding) has ceased. Once fertility has resumed, usually after the first menses, a couple should:

- "continue to have intercourse only at the end of the day on dry days (or a BIP of unchanging mucus) before ovulation (some cervical-mucus only methods recommend having intercourse only every other day on dry days or during a BIP),"
- "before ovulation, to consider any day of mucus (or any change from the BIP) and 3 days past as fertile,"
- "if using temperature, to resume intercourse at the end of the 3rd day of high temperatures above the cover line, i.e., the first three high temps over the previous six,"
- "if using cervical mucus signs only, to continue to have intercourse at the end of the day on dry days only during the first cycle. In subsequent cycles, if the woman is confident that it is her Peak Day of cervical mucus, then intercourse may resume at the end of the 4th day past Peak."

Although some of the traditional NFP methods have been called into



question in this review, the article is careful to point out that the Lactational Amenorrhea Method (LAM) is still a good way to prevent pregnancy soon after the birth of a child. The premise of LAM is that the return of fertility can be delayed if women meet three main criteria:

- 1) have no period
- 2) be totally breastfeeding the infant (no formula)
- 3) be within the first six months post-partum.

It is also important that the woman continue night feedings with her baby and that there be no long intervals between feedings. Indeed, this method has been found to be very effective.

One study found that the unintended pregnancy rate for LAM was 0.8% within the first six months post-partum.

What does this new information mean to you if you are currently in the breastfeeding transition? NFP researchers are currently trying to develop better methods for monitoring fertility during this time period.

One recent study says that the TwoDay Method works well during this time period. Column four has information on the TwoDay method or visit www.irh.org/RTP-TDM.htm).

Other studies suggest that since during the breastfeeding transition some of the fertility markers are disassociated from when a woman is actually fertile, a hormonal monitor should be developed to measure exactly when the hormonal changes occur that indicate fertility.

There is no question that the breastfeeding transition is challenging for many women using NFP. This review suggests that the current guidelines for women using NFP during this time period should be revised. However, the good news for women wishing to use natural forms of family planning and follow the church's teachings is that LAM, and the Two Day Method are still considered good natural methods for preventing pregnancy after child birth. Also, many studies support the 99% efficacy of many NFP methods outside of the breast feeding transition. Remember, if you have any questions about how to chart your fertility symptoms or what your current chart might mean, call your local NFP instructor for a chart review.

The entire article discussed above, The Breastfeeding Transition and Natural Family Planning. CMR-Vol. 20 Nos. 3 & 4 Summer/Fall 2009 can be found on the USCCB's website www.usccb.org/prolife/issue/s/nfp/cmr.shtml



The TwoDay Method

As the recent review article in *Current Medical Research* has suggested that the TwoDay Method of Natural Family Planning may be effective in preventing unintended pregnancies during the breastfeeding transition, it is, timely to give a brief summary on what the TwoDay Method entails.

The TwoDay Method is a natural fertility awareness method that uses cervical secretions to indicate fertility. It is a simple method where the woman asks herself two questions every day.

- 1) Did I see any cervical secretions today?
- 2) Did I see any cervical secretions yesterday?

If the woman answers "yes" to either of these questions then she should consider herself as potentially fertile at the present. If she did not see any secretions today or yesterday then she is likely infertile at the present.

The TwoDay Method has been found to be more than 96% effective with correct use.

Please email topics, articles, questions, and suggestions to TLC at jndorsten@gmail.com