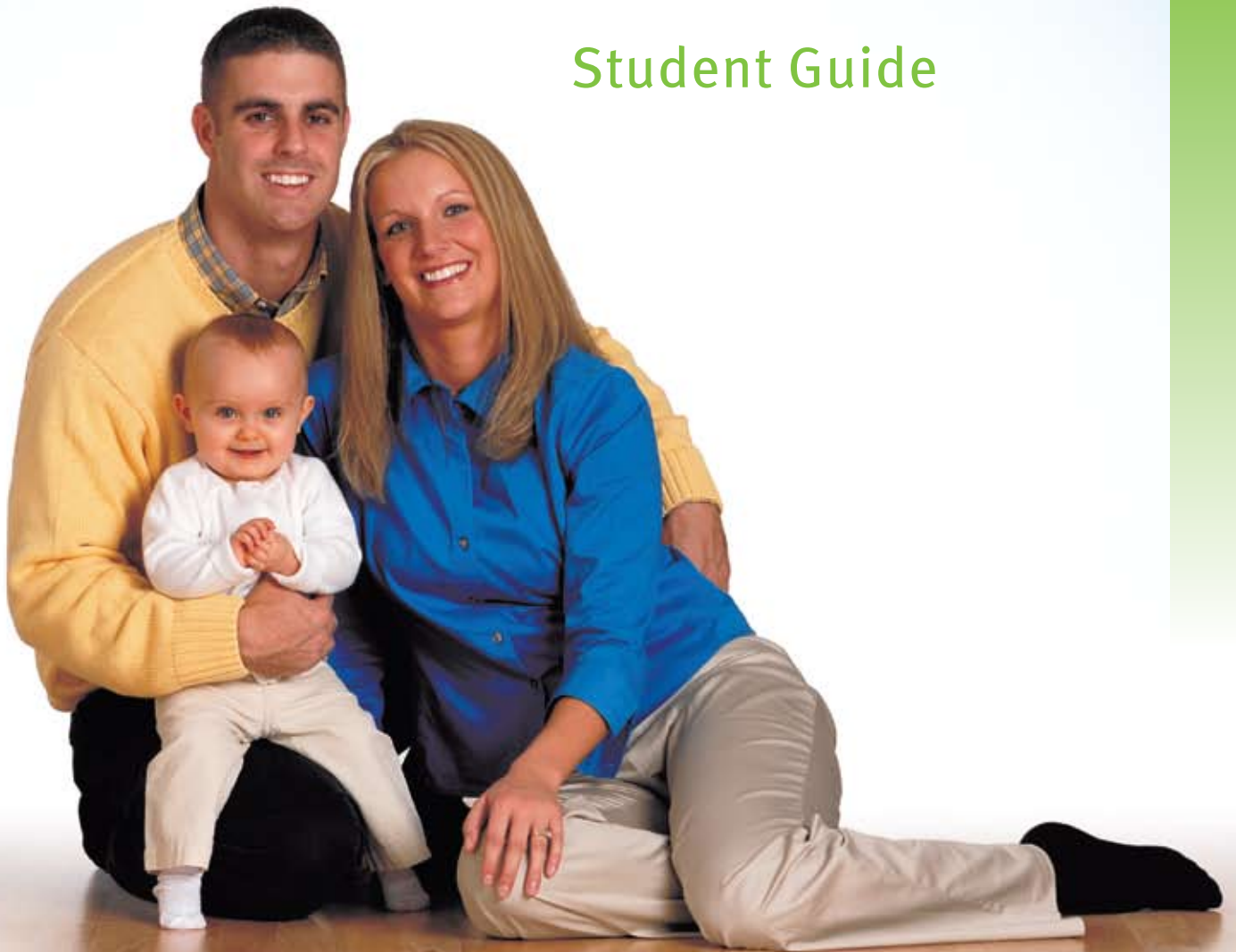




The Art of
**Natural
Family
Planning[®]**

Student Guide



What Is Natural Family Planning (NFP)?

The human body speaks more than one language. One of these languages is the bodily language of love, spoken in a unique way by the sexual powers. In this class, you will learn the language of the sexual powers by observing, recording and interpreting the bodily signs of human fertility, the essence of NFP.

What is NFP?

- Fertility awareness (knowledge)
- Means of reading the body's signs of fertility and infertility
- Over 99% effective



Natural Family Planning is **fertility awareness**, the knowledge of a couple's fertility. It is a means of reading the body's signs of fertility and infertility; applying this knowledge through the Sympto-Thermal Method (STM) is over 99% effective in postponing pregnancy. A married couple's virtuous application of this knowledge either to try to achieve a pregnancy or to postpone a pregnancy is called responsible parenthood.

After finishing Class 1, couples should:

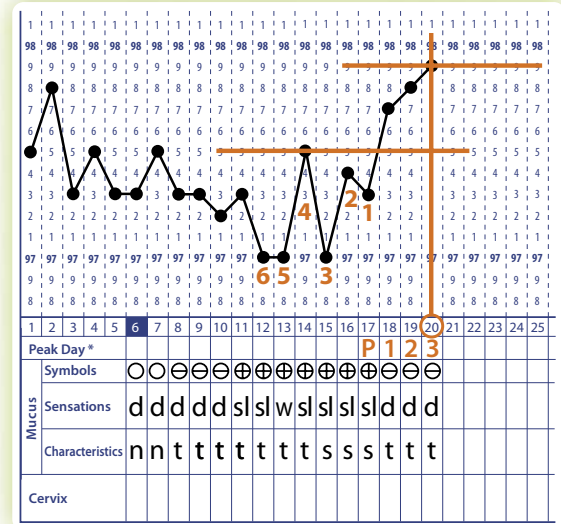
- understand that the human body speaks a language
- learn the language of the body spoken through human fertility
- learn how to record and interpret the observable signs of fertility
- know how to identify the boundary between the most fertile time (time of ovulation) and the most infertile time of the female cycle (time after ovulation)
- be able to apply what was learned

The next lesson in this class will discuss the important implications of the principle that the human body is the expression of the person.

Notes

It should be noted that the term "rising pattern" does *not* mean that each temperature must be "successively higher than its preceding temperature," but it is essential that "each reading — considered individually — is higher than each one of the six lower readings."⁴

It is important to note that if the cervix sign is used, the cervix must be both *closed* and *hard* for three days, i.e., not in the process of closing or hardening, for the identification of Phase III.



This chart illustrates a typical application of the ST Rule.

⁴ Roetzer, 30.

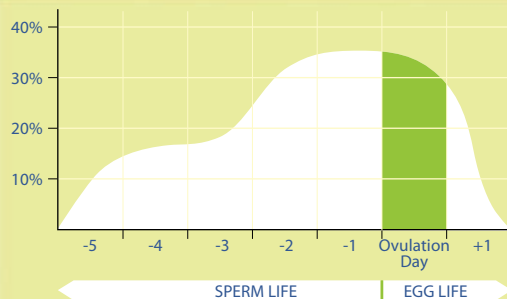
In the absence of mucus, sperm normally live no more than a few hours; but, in the presence of mucus, they can live up to five days. It is the fertile mucus that enables sperm to stay alive for extended periods of time. It also capacitates the sperm (i.e., makes it capable of fertilizing the egg), which is critical for achieving a pregnancy.

Female Fertility

As ovulation approaches, a woman's level of estrogen increases and signals the brain to release higher doses of Luteinizing Hormone (LH). This surge in LH around mid-cycle triggers the release of an egg from the ovarian follicle. The follicle then becomes the corpus luteum and releases progesterone. The egg enters the Fallopian tube and is capable of being fertilized only within the next 24 hours. (Occasionally, there is a second ovulation, and this occurs within 24 hours after the first one.)

The graph below summarizes this discussion. It depicts the limited time each month that a viable male sperm can fertilize a female egg, thus creating a new human life. This is reflected by the ability of an individual sperm to live a maximum of five days in the presence of fertile mucus, and the ability of one egg to live a maximum of 24 hours. The graph also includes the possibility of a second egg being released and living for a maximum of 24 hours. One aspect of "the art of natural family planning" to achieve a pregnancy is to maximize the timing and ability of a viable sperm to fertilize an egg.

Probability of Conception



Allen J. Wilcox, M.D., Clarice R. Weinberg, Ph.D., and Donna D. Baird, Ph.D., "Timing of Sexual Intercourse in Relation to Ovulation," *New England Journal of Medicine* 333:23 (December 7, 1995): 1517-1521.

Class 3

Introduction • Review • Other Methods of NFP • Applying NFP in Special Situations
Behaviors that Attack Human Dignity and Marital Love • Birth Control • Effectiveness of NFP
Benefits of Breastfeeding and Its Effect on Fertility
NFP During Premenopause • Benefits of NFP