

Basal body temperature tracking

Basal body temperature (BBT) is your internal body temperature while at rest. Tracking basal body temperature is a popular fertility awareness method (FAM) that is useful for identifying fertile windows within the menstrual cycle to improve (or reduce) chances of conception. Certain factors can alter your basal body temperature, including:

- Alcohol consumption
- Fever or illness
- Lack of sleep
- Stress

When using BBT charting as a birth control method, individuals should avoid intercourse or use a backup method (e.g., condom or spermicide) between the start of menstruation and approximately three days following the increase of BBT. It's important to note that BBT charting and other fertility awareness methods are not 100% effective and do not protect against sexually transmitted infections (STIs).



How to measure basal body temperature

To determine your basal body temperature, you'll need a basal thermometer. Basal thermometers are similar to digital oral thermometers; however, basal thermometers are more precise and provide temperature readings to two decimal points (e.g., 98.60°F).

For the most accurate reading, measure your basal body temperature immediately after waking up every morning, ideally at the same time each day. It's essential to take your temperature before getting out of bed or consuming any foods or beverages. Keep your basal thermometer and BBT chart next to your bed for easy access.

Record your BBT on the chart using a dot or other indicator next to your temperature and the current day of your cycle. Create a line graph by connecting the dots each day to better represent the temperature changes throughout your cycle. Remember that the first day of your period marks the first day of your cycle.

Mark a dot or other indicator in the corresponding boxes at the bottom of the tracking sheet if you experienced any of the factors that can alter your BBT. This can help you determine if temperature variances are the result of any of these factors or if they are natural shifts in temperature related to your cycle.

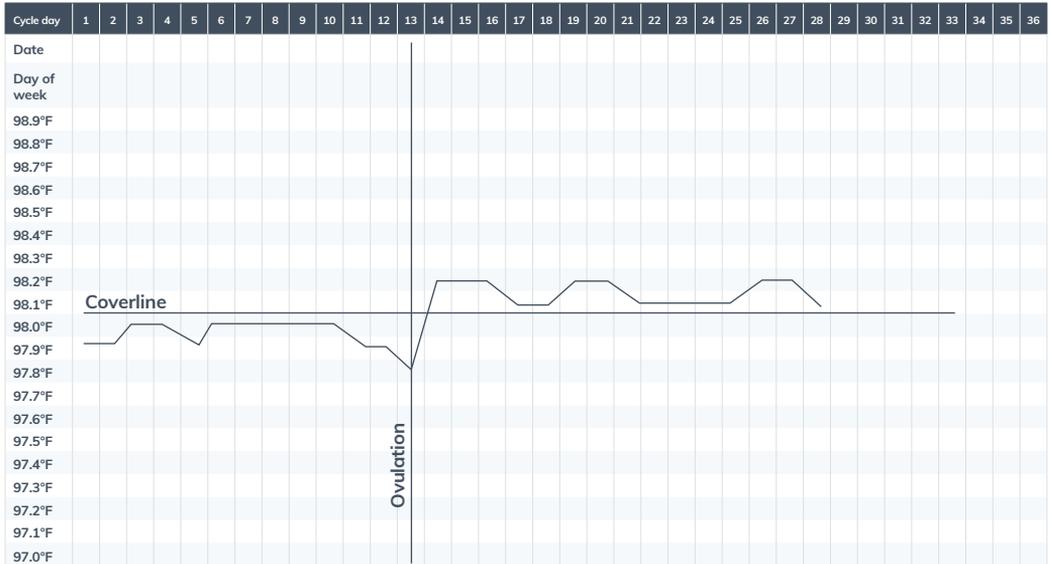
How to interpret results

Your body temperature drops to its lowest point during your cycle approximately 24 hours before ovulation (release of the egg) occurs. Shortly after ovulation, basal body temperature rises between 0.5°F to 1.0°F. This shift in temperature results from the release of progesterone and body temperature remains elevated throughout the luteal phase of your cycle until menstruation. Monitoring these slight variances in temperature can help signify when you're most fertile.

You can determine your approximate ovulation date by drawing a vertical line that intersects with the temperature recording occurring the day before your temperature spikes. A coverline, which is a horizontal line that separates average temperatures before and after ovulation, provides a visual representation of temperature shifts during your cycle. Determine where to draw your coverline by adding 0.15°F to the highest temperature during the first ten days of your cycle. Use the sample BBT chart below as an example.



Basal body temperature tracking example (°F)



If you're tracking your cycle to determine your fertile window, consider recording other indicating factors on your BBT chart, such as cervical mucus or the results from an ovulation test, also known as an ovulation predictor kit (OPK). A positive ovulation test reflects a surge of luteinizing hormone (LH) that precedes ovulation by approximately 24 hours. Cervical mucus (CM) consistency and quantity varies throughout the cycle. A lack of CM or general dryness (typically occurring at the beginning of the menstrual cycle and after the fertile window) suggests low fertility and sticky or creamy CM indicates that the fertile window is approaching. Clear, stretchy CM resembling raw egg whites is indicative of high fertility.



Basal body temperature tracking (°F)

Cycle day	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	
Date																																					
Day of week																																					
98.9°F																																					
98.8°F																																					
98.7°F																																					
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97.2°F																																					
97.1°F																																					
97.0°F																																					
Alcohol consumption																																					
Illness																																					
Lack of sleep																																					
Stress																																					
OPK (+/-)																																					
Cervical mucus*																																					

*Types of cervical mucus:

- Dry: D
- Sticky: S
- Creamy: C
- Egg white/clear: EW



References

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