

Are there certain days of the month when it's easier to get pregnant?

KEY WORDS 

menstrual cycle | ovulation | fertile window | contraception 

You might have heard that, in theory, women can become pregnant at any time in their cycle (called the **menstrual cycle**). The average menstrual cycle lasts between 28–32 days. Some people have shorter cycles, while others have much longer ones. Anything between the 22 – 35 day range is considered “normal” – anything outside of this is irregular and would warrant a trip to the doctor’s office for more clarity.

There are certain times during your cycle when you are more likely to get pregnant. Let's dive deeper into the different phases of your menstrual cycle that impact the chances of you getting pregnant.

MENSTRUATION (first days of your cycle)

The first day of your period also marks the first day of your menstrual cycle. Most periods last between 3-7 days of bleeding at different intensities, and this is the time when you're least likely to get pregnant. However, if you have an irregular menstrual cycle, meaning your period is often late or early, having sex during menstruation still means you can get pregnant.

FERTILE WINDOW (middle of your cycle)

Six to seven days during the middle of your menstrual cycle is when you can get pregnant, with the most fertile day being ovulation. **Ovulation** occurs when an egg is released from your ovaries and lives inside the body for about 24 hours, for the sperm to fertilise. This happens at the exact middle of your cycle – so this is day 14 if you have a 28-day cycle. But, as mentioned, you can get pregnant at any time during this phase because the sperm released during sex (either from ejaculation or precum) can stay in your body for 5-6 days. To get more clarity on which sexual acts can lead to pregnancy, we have another text for you on that here.

If you do not have an exact 28-day cycle (and many women don't!), you can calculate when you are most fertile (when you're ovulating) by tracking certain signs from your body:

- a slight increase in your body temperature
- higher desire for sexual activity
- light pain or cramps in your lower belly
- vaginal discharge that is clearer and more slippery, similar to egg whites

LUTEAL PHASE (the end of the fertile window to the beginning of the next period)

The luteal phase is when you are less likely to get pregnant (but, not impossible, as mentioned). This phase usually overlaps with the beginning of **pre-menstrual syndrome (PMS)**, which can include:

- frequent changes in desire to have sex
- feeling more anxious or depressed
- having difficulty staying focused on tasks
- increased or decreased appetite
- difficulty with sleeping

Those are the main phases in the menstrual cycle that impact the likelihood of someone getting pregnant. It's important to note that there are many **factors which can make your cycle more irregular**. These include:

- disruptions to your regular lifestyle, such as **stress, gaining or losing a lot of weight, intense exercise, traveling, viruses** or other sicknesses
- hormone imbalance disorders, such as **thyroid issues or poly-cystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS)**. These can impact at least 1 in 10 women and require a visit to the gynecologist to test your hormone levels.
- **endometriosis**, which is a reproductive disorder that occurs when certain tissue grows outside of your uterus and attaches itself to the ovaries or fallopian tubes. Signs of this disorder are abnormal bleeding, cramps or severe pain before and during your period.

No matter your situation, scheduling a visit to a gynecologist can help you gain more understanding about the specificities of your cycle – no two cycles are the same. Stay safe, you've got this!

**CONTRACEPTION
AND PREGNANCY**

