

LOOK!

**There is no totally reliable method
for calculating the fertile days, so be
always careful!**

MENSTRUAL CALENDAR

- Helps you with cycle control
- You can use to record the intensity of bleeding and complaints associated with the cycle e.g. headache and menstrual cramps
- Helps you to answer the gynaecologist's specific questions about cycles and complaints



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IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT BEING A WOMAN,
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CYCLE

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THE (FIRST) PERIOD

The first period is a special event in every girl's life, and because it is genetically determined you cannot urge or delay it. Nowadays girls start to menstruate at an average age of 12.5 years. There is no need to worry if your menstruation does not start until the age of 16, although after this age it is advisable to see a gynaecologist.

THE MENSTRUAL CYCLE - PART I.

The interplay of hormones produced by the brain and the ovary

- Hormones are released by the pituitary gland in the brain. These hormones travel to the ovaries, where they trigger the maturation of follicles, from which one will ovulate in each menstrual cycle

1. From puberty onwards, a single follicle, containing an egg, matures every 4 weeks to the point of ovulation

- The production of the hormone oestrogen begins in cells inside the ovary. Then the ovum itself produce hormones as well
- Oestrogen causes the endometrial lining to start maturing

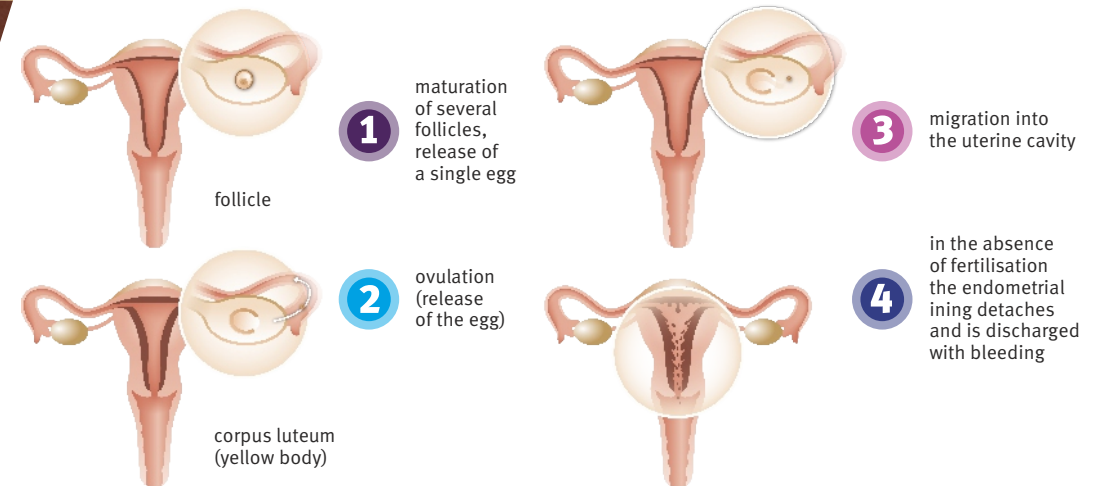
2. Approximately 8 to 14 days after the start of the menstrual cycle, the mature egg is released from the follicle: this is called ovulation

3. The egg migrates to the uterine cavity via the fallopian tube

- The egg may be fertilised by one of the sperm cells in the uterine tube
- Follicles that do not contain an egg are transformed into yellow bodies
- The yellow body produces progesterone (yellow-body hormone)
- The yellow-body hormone prepares the endometrial lining for implantation of the fertilised egg

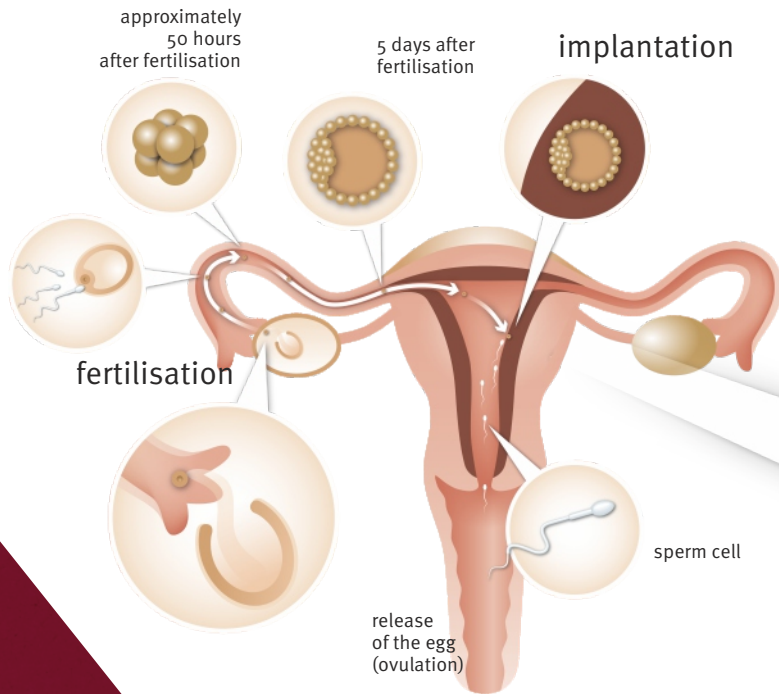
4. If no fertilisation takes place, the hormone production of the ovaries decreases

- The upper layer of the endometrial lining detaches in response to the decreased hormone levels – bleeding starts
- At the same time, the maturation of a new follicle begins in the ovaries
- in response to the hormones secreted by the pituitary gland



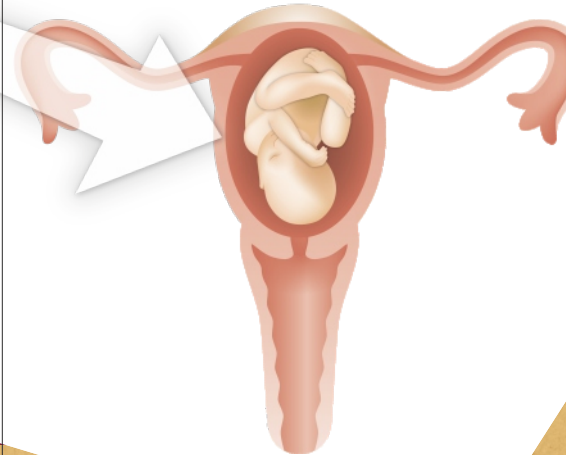
RELEASE OF THE EGG (OVULATION)

- The matured egg is released from the follicle (ovulation)
- The fertile egg migrates through the fallopian tube



CONCEPTION

pregnancy



FERTILISATION

- After having sex sperm cells migrate from the vagina to the fallopian tube via the uterine cavity
- Fertilisation takes place by the fusion of the fertile egg and a single sperm cell
- The fertilised egg (zygote) starts to divide approximately 1 day after fertilisation

IMPLANTATION

- Approximately 5 to 7 days after fertilisation the zygote

THE MENSTRUAL CYCLE - PART II.

- The first day of the cycle is the first day of bleeding
- The endometrial lining forms and waits for the impregnated egg
- The release of the egg (ovulation) occurs approximately 14 days before the next bleeding
- After the release of the egg (ovulation), the egg can be fertilised only within a 24-hour window, but the sperm cells remain viable in the female body for up to 5 days
- If no fertilisation occurs, the endometrial lining detaches = bleeding
- The bleeding lasts for an average of 3-7 days (or more rarely, for longer)

LENGTH OF THE MENSTRUAL CYCLE

- Normally 28 days
- The cycle may be longer or shorter, regular or irregular
- Bleeding that is irregular and/or varies in intensity is not abnormal in young girls at the start. During the first year the length can vary from 21 to 45 days and it is still considered normal. So don't worry if your cycle doesn't get totally regular for the first time

TIP

Using a menstrual calendar makes cycle control easier.

