

Common Questions and Answers Regarding NFP

How effective is it?

99% effective, please see References for specifics.

Does it work for women with irregular cycles?

Yes. NFP methods track a woman's fertility signs each day. Even the most unusual cycle can be tracked effectively.

How is it different from artificial contraception if the goal of not achieving a pregnancy is the same?

Artificial contraception changes the intercourse union by sterilizing it either with chemicals (birth control pills, injections) or by using barriers (condoms, diaphragms, sponges). When using NFP, couples choose to respect the intercourse union so deeply that they avoid having sex during fertile times if they wish to avoid a pregnancy.

Why does the Church say it is okay to use NFP but not contraception?

Every act of intercourse using NFP is open to the possible transmission of life. We do not withhold our fertility from each other when coming together as two people in one body. Using contraception separates the gift of fertility from the act of intercourse in marriage. It leaves intercourse sterile and self-serving.

How do you learn it?

The absolute best way to learn NFP is with a trained instructor. Some books or DVD methods are available, but they do not provide the best learning environment. Accuracy is crucial when learning family planning. Accuracy is best achieved with an instructor.

My parents used Rhythm and said it didn't work. I'm proof.

Rhythm is an old method of family planning that relied on all women having regular cycles. Most women have variable cycles. Modern methods of NFP work with all cycles, regular or irregular. Monitoring fertility day by day achieves excellent results.

How can you NOT have sex with your husband or wife? We're in Love.

It's difficult sometimes to abstain from intercourse, but self-control is a good thing. We develop discipline in our self, our marriage, and it carries into our life. We abstain at various times in our marriages, not just when we are fertile. We abstain when we travel for work. We abstain when we are sick or tired. These times help us recognize our longing for our husband/wife, and make the times we have sexual intercourse more special.

How can this help your marriage?

NFP requires communication and working together. You develop a respect for each other, including your fertility. You develop new ways to express your love to your husband/wife on a regular basis – your sexual relationship does not become the focus of your marriage. Your intimacy increases, deepening your marriage.

When should we learn NFP?

The best time to learn NFP is before you get married. Your first month using NFP is a learning month, and should be accomplished before you use the method to avoid conception. Ideally couples should chart for six months before marriage so they will be very confident in their charting abilities.