



Life Lines

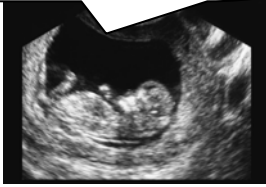
Ist Way Pregnancy Support Center Newsletter

333 E. McDowell Rd. ☞ Phoenix, AZ ☞ 85004 ☞ 602-261-

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**Announcement: Tues. Aug 21st,
6:00pm, open members meeting at 1st

The *Ist Way* to a mother's heart is to see her baby's heartbeat!



Natural Family Planning: **Key to Intimacy.**

Written by Fletcher Doyle, a copy editor in the sports department at The Buffalo News. He is author of the book 'Natural Family Planning Blessed Our Marriage: 19 True Stories' (Servant Books). He and his wife, Tracy, have two children. He is a graduate of Towson State University.

“**N**atural Family Planning is considered, even among its proponents, an inadequate title for the various natural methods of fertility regulation. No one has been able to come up with a short phrase that describes all of the personal, medical and spiritual benefits experienced by married couples who use those methods.

Natural Family Planning, (NFP), is a way, John Paul II explained in his Theology of the Body teachings, for spouses to encounter some of the innocence the first couple experienced in their one-flesh union, when they were naked without shame and they loved according to God's plan. Let's look at some particulars.

Just what is Natural Family Planning? Medical science has discovered that women display two visible signs of fertility during their menstrual

cycle that are highly accurate in determining when they ovulate. The two signs are cervical mucus and a change in basal at-rest body temperature. The several methods of NFP place different emphasis on these signs—several do not use temperature at all—but in each case these signs are charted daily.

A large study on the effectiveness of the symptothermal method (or STM, which uses temperature and mucus observations) was published online in February 2007 in Human Reproduction, Europe's largest reproductive medicine journal. For a method to be considered as effective as the pill when used correctly, one woman in 100 would get

A couple who decides that now is not the time to add a new child to the family abstains from intercourse during the fertile time. All rumors aside, this works.

pregnant. The rate for the STM was far better for avoiding unwanted pregnancy: **Only one woman out of 250 got pregnant.** Conversely, knowing when a woman ovulates can also help couples conceive. Dr. Thomas Hilgers of the Pope Paul VI Institute for the Study of Human Reproduction wrote in The

Medical Applications of Natural Family Planning that 98 percent of couples using his Creighton Model of NFP (mucus observations only, a method developed at Creighton University) achieved a pregnancy within six months.

Mucus observations can also help detect reproductive health problems. One woman was put on the pill at age 16 for irregular periods. Engaged six years later, she and her fiancé decided she should get off the pill. They learned NFP. Charting helped the doctor diagnose her with polycystic ovary syndrome, the reason for her irregular periods. The pill had masked the symptoms, which showed she almost never ovulated. With the help of the fertility drug Clomid and NFP, they had twins. Later, she showed signs of fertility for one day, and the couple conceived the one they call their “miracle child.”

Here is another common reproductive health problem. A woman whose time between ovulation and menstruation is short may not be producing enough of a hormone called progesterone. This can make her prone to miscarriage. A doctor can detect this by reading her charts and order preventive measures.

Natural Family Planning is not just biological; it has to do with the unity of the whole

