**Biology of Fertility**

The Biology of controlling fertility

1. Fertile Periods

Objectives from this section are as follows –

* Infertility treatments and contraception are based on the biology of fertility.
* Cyclical fertility in females leading to a fertile period.
* Continuous fertility in males.
* Calculation of fertile periods and their uses.

**Pupil notes**

In human males, there is a relatively constant level of FSH and ICSH in the bloodstream

Therefore, a steady quantity of testosterone is secreted and a steady quantity of sperm produced

As a result, human males are continuously fertile

Cyclical fertility is in marked contrast with the continuous fertility in males

The interplay of pituitary and ovarian hormones results in the period of fertility being restricted to the 1-2 days following ovulation

The indicators ‘Temperature’ and ‘Mucus’ can be used by a woman to calculate her fertile period

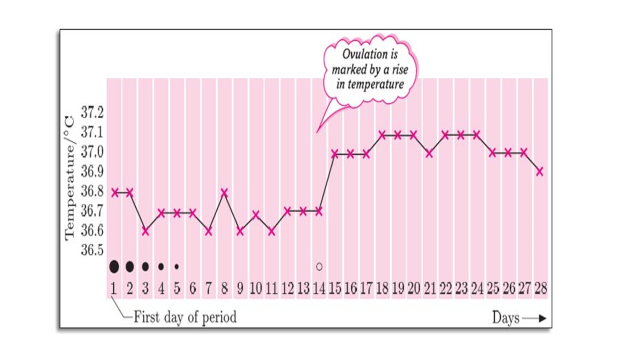
This is obviously of use to a couple who are wishing to conceive

Approximately 1 day after the LH surge which triggers ovulation, a woman’s body temperature rises by 0.2-0.5 C

It remains at this elevated level for remainder of the luteal phase

Fertile period lasts for about 1-2 days

The infertile period is resumed after the 3rd daily recording of higher temperature



The cervical mucus secreted into the vagina during the fertile period is thin and watery

This allows easy access of sperm to the female reproductive system

After ovulation, progesterone causes the mucus to gradually increase in viscosity