

# Optimizing Natural Fertility

Courtney D. Lynch, PhD MPH

Assistant Professor &

Director of Reproductive Epidemiology

OSU College of Medicine,

Medicine/Obstetrics and Gynecology



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

HEALTH PLAN

## Importance of the Preconception Visit

### Things to be addressed:

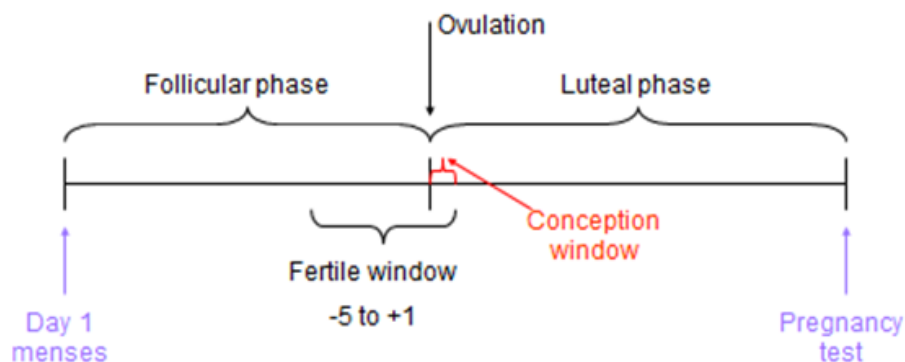
- Vitamin use
- Achieving and maintaining a healthy weight
- Smoking cessation, as needed
- Immunization history (e.g., MMR, Tdap, Chicken Pox, Flu)
- Chronic conditions and medication use
- Sexually transmitted infections
- Social environment

### Factors that affect conception

- Quality and survival of egg
- Median ~ 12 hours (Weinberg, 1995)
- Quality and survival of sperm
- Up to 6 days (median ~ 1 day) (Weinberg, 1995)

## Conception Timing

Pinpointing the 6-7 fertile days each month.



## How to Increase the Chance of Pregnancy

1. Lots of intercourse
  - At least twice a week (not just Friday & Saturday)
  - Every day is fine
  - No lubricant except something sperm-friendly (e.g., Pre-Seed)
2. Try to target the fertile window
  - Cervical mucus observations
  - Basal body temperature shift
  - Ovulation test kit
  - ClearBlue® Fertility Monitor

## Healthy living is important!

- Achieve and maintain a healthy weight
  - Eat a healthy balanced diet
- Take your vitamins (with at least 400 mcg of folic acid)
  - Male partners too!
- Stop smoking and minimize drinking
- Cut back on caffeine use
- Stay active
- Minimize stress (consider meditation, yoga)
- Minimize exposure to toxic substances (e.g., pesticides, household cleaners)

## When to Seek Help from a Professional

Women under age 35

- After 12 months of regular well-timed intercourse
- If you determine that you are not ovulating

Women ages 35 and older

- After 6 months of regular well-timed intercourse