

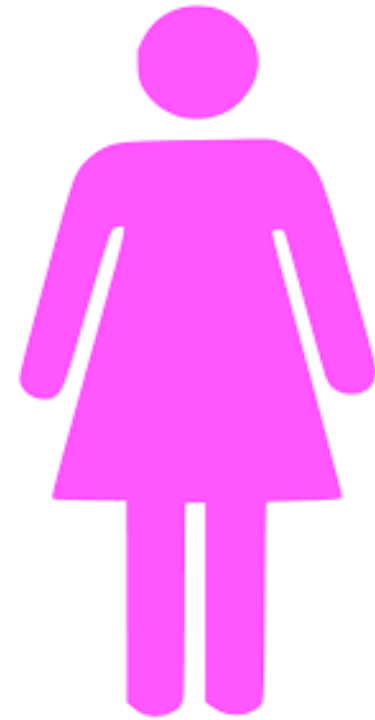
Stages Of A Women's Cycle



Healthy
Hormones

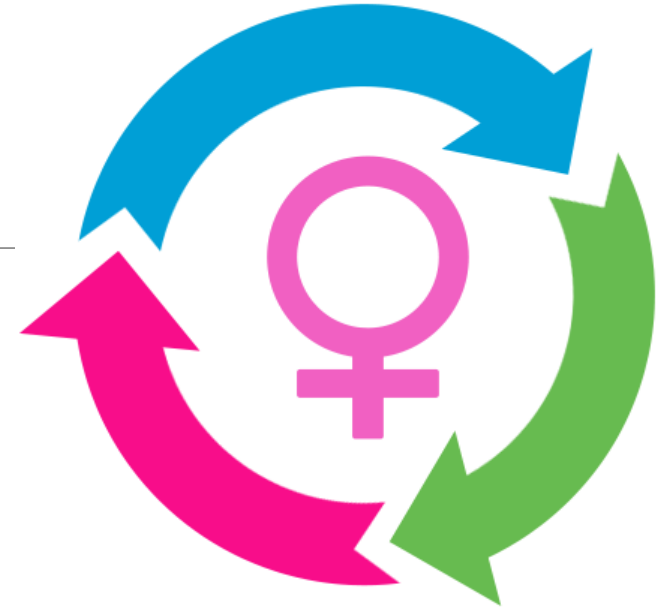
The Female Cycle

- Help a client understand cycle is extremely helpful for helping her with her hormone issues.
- If they understand what is suppose to happen – they can be aware of what is not supposed to happen
- Being able to communicate this information to you will help you help them



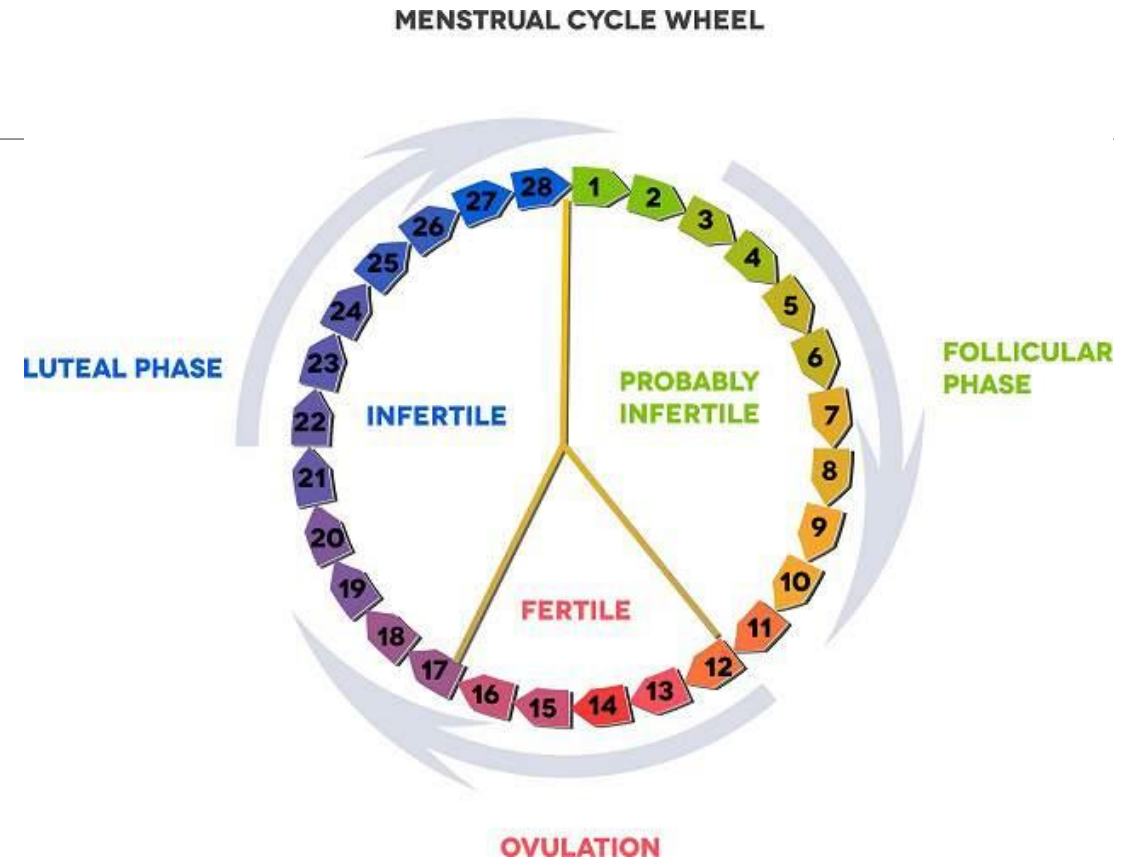
It Is A Monthly Cycle

- We talk about the phases to understand what is supposed to happen
- Each phase is affected by the others
- Preventing major symptoms in the luteal phase (PMS) and the menstrual cycle starts in the follicular phase
- Cannot isolate the phases or just work on symptoms
- Having a focus on the major players and supporting them through the cycle is important



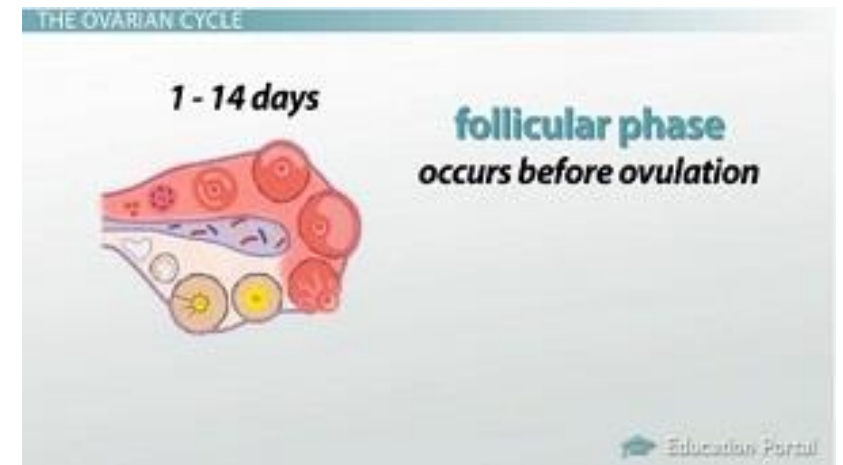
Four Phases

- Follicular Phase
- Ovulation Phase
- Luteal Phase
- Menstrual Phase



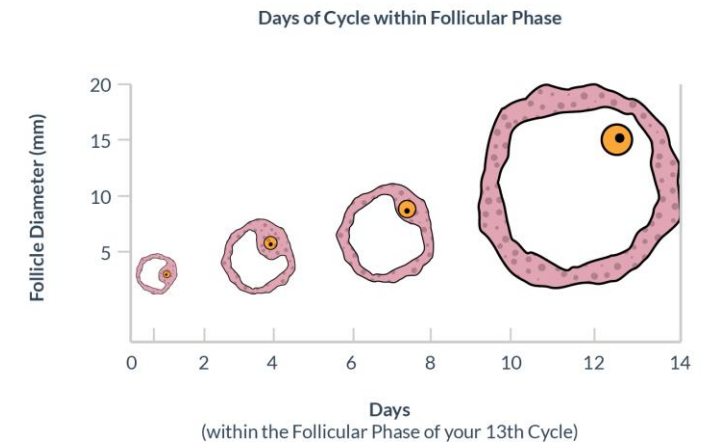
Follicular Phase

- The beginning of the cycle starts with the hypothalamus sending signals for hormone production to begin
- Not just reproductive hormones
- Hypothalamus will signal the pituitary to discharge follicle-stimulating hormones (FSH)
- Tells the ovaries to prepare the egg for release
- Estrogen levels increase which prompts the uterine lining to thicken in order to host the egg that will be released during ovulation



Follicular Phase

- Once estrogen rises, FSH is suppressed to allow for the release of LH
- Last 7-10 days
- At beginning, many young women feel low energy because they have low estrogen and progesterone
- As estrogen rises, for these women, energy rises
- Peri-menopausal women may experience high estrogen levels - known as an estrogen bath
- If hormones are balanced, this can be a time of energy



Follicular Phase

- Estrogen dominant females may have symptoms during this time
- Could be due to failure to successfully detox out the estrogen during the previous menstrual phase (liver, gut)
- Estrogen levels could climb faster than normal during this time and cause symptoms (adrenals)
- Symptoms could include, estrogen migraines or regular headaches, bloating, anxiety, fatigue



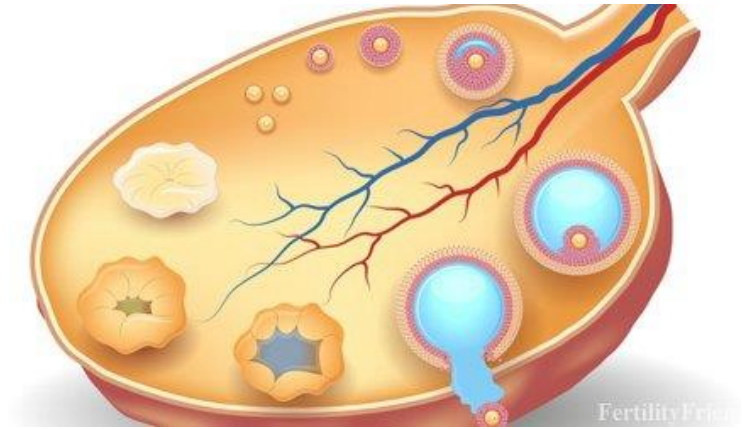
Follicular Phases

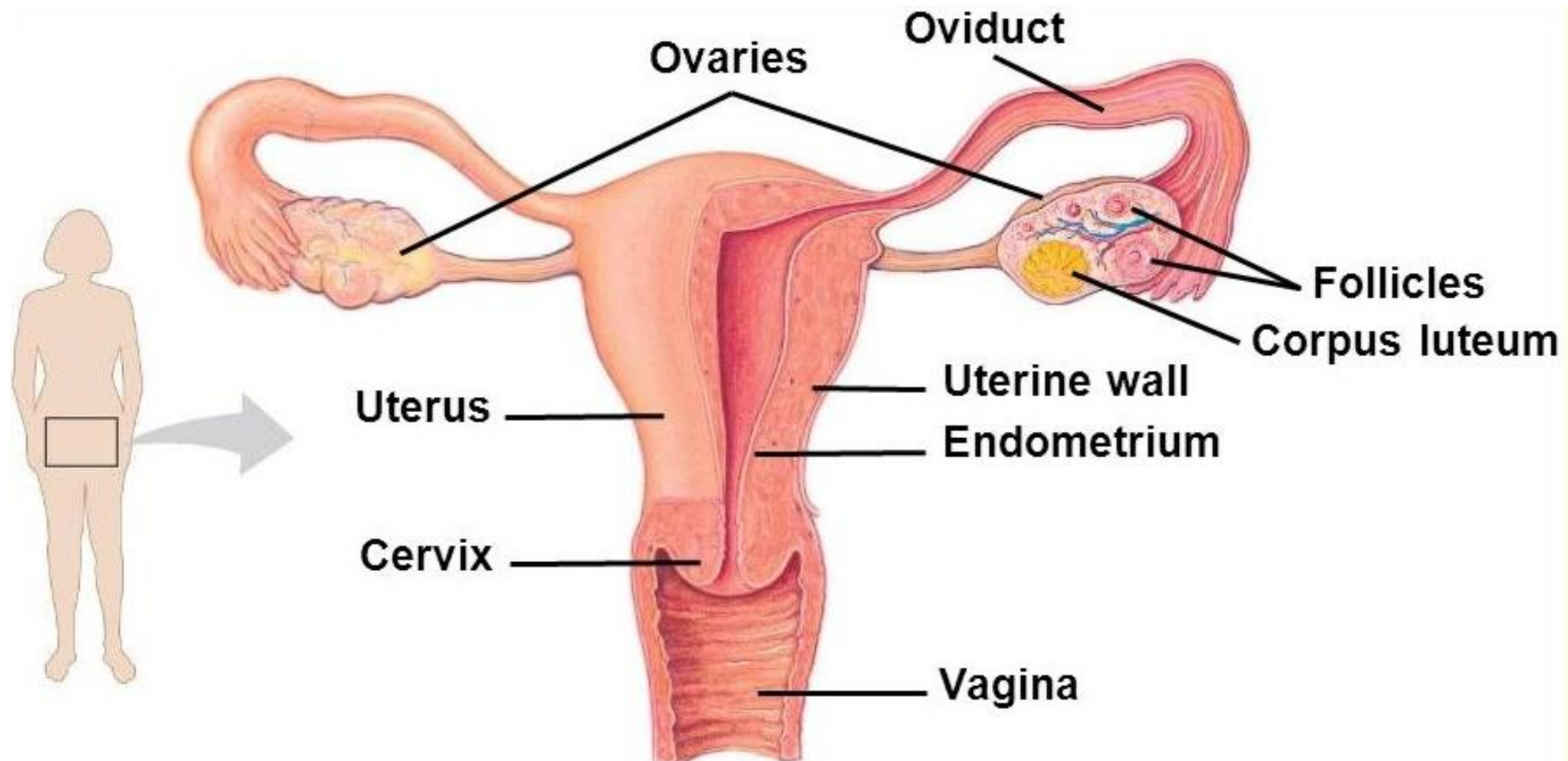
- Women generally feel good, physically and emotionally during this time so if they do not, it is a sign of an imbalance
- Getting plenty exercise is easier during this phase
- Foods should include plenty of fruits and vegetables especially phytoestrogens
- Lean protein, EFA also helpful
- Watch out for emotional foods cravings at this time – it is a sign of an imbalance



Ovulation Phase

- FSH has done its job so the pituitary releases luteinizing hormones (LH)
- This causes one ovary follicle to burst and release an egg
- The remnants of the follicle is the corpus luteum which will grow and produces estrogen and progesterone
- The egg moves into the fallopian tube and makes its way to the uterus
- Estrogen levels increase, thickening the uterus and encouraging the growth of immune cells.
- Testosterone plays a role in the release of the egg, as it spikes up and then decreases when ovulation ends





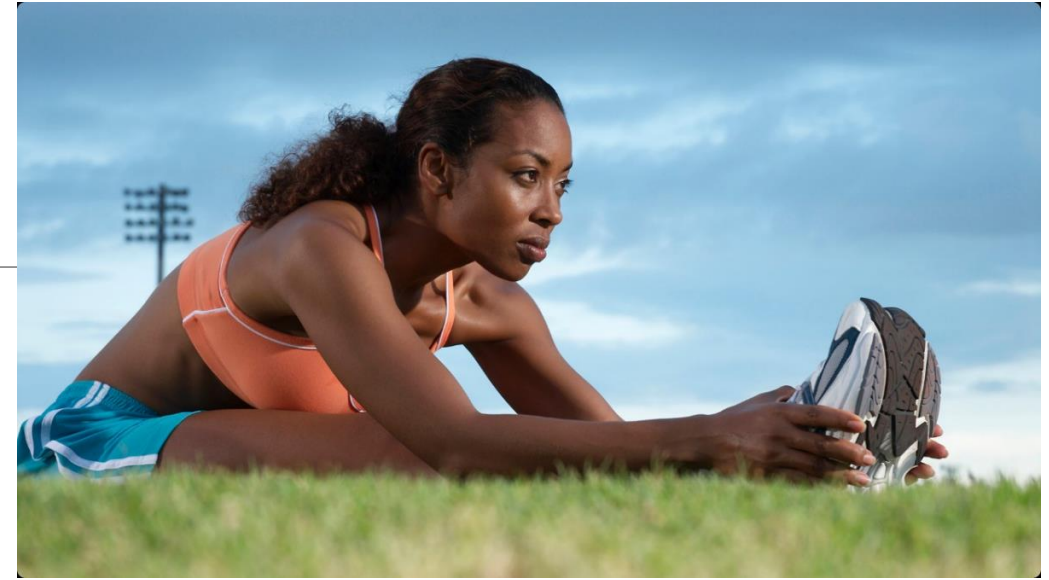
Ovulation

- During this time, women may experience another increase in energy.
- Lasts 3 - 4 days
- Ovulation pain occurs in 20% of women – no documentation as to how many of these women are estrogen dominant
- Called “mittelschmerz” which is German for middle pain – it will hit on one side or the other – can last a few hours or up to three days
- If a woman is estrogen dominant – it can be very uncomfortable and painful
- Vitex (chaste berry) can be very helpful to relieve the pain especially in conjunction with anti-inflammatories such as fish oil or bromelain



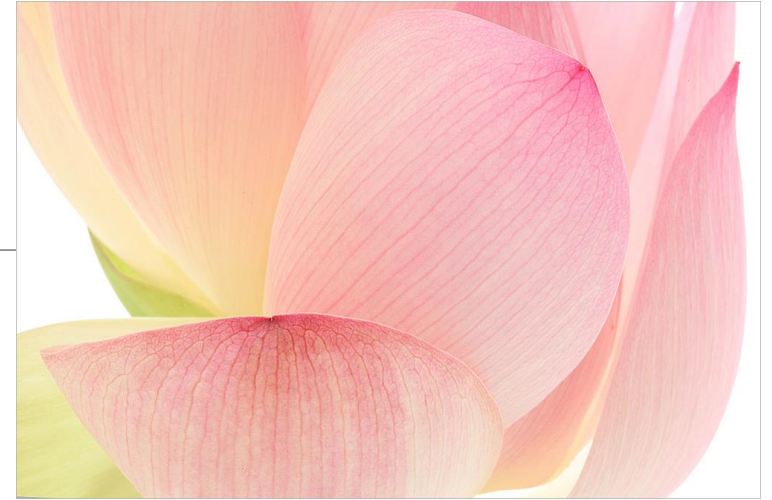
Ovulation Phase

- Steady energy is needed during this
- Small meals more often – or just split meals in two and spread out the eating
- Because energy levels are good during this time – it's a good time exercise
- If women feel well during this time – they often feel really attractive – nature's way to help the women attract a mate



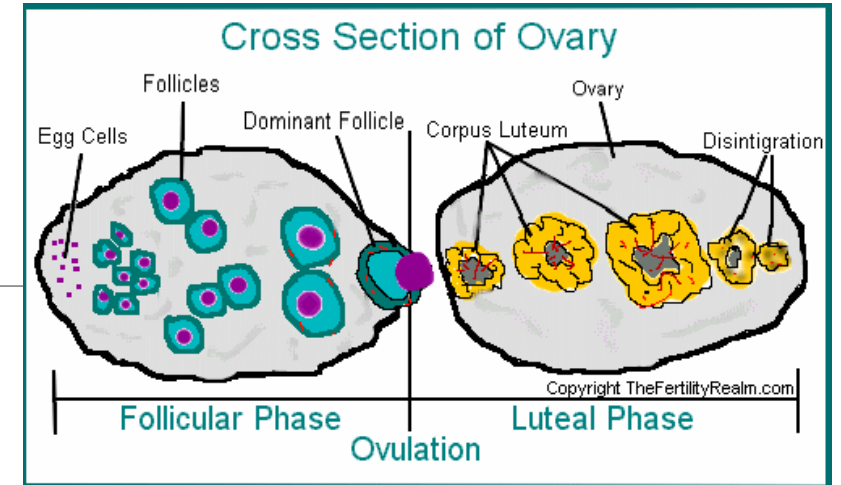
Luteal Phases

- An increase in progesterone occurs as the corpus luteum, a hormone-like substance, develops on the ovary.
- It sends a signal to the pituitary to stop making follicle-stimulating and luteinizing hormones.
- Ensures that there is only one egg.
- Estrogen and testosterone levels also rise toward the end of the phase.
- If the egg is not fertilized, then the corpus luteum is reabsorbed into the body
- Progesterone production stops as soon as the period starts



Luteal Phase

- Last 7 – 10 days
- This is the time frame when PMS can occur
- Happens when hormone imbalance are present – stress is a major factor
- High testosterone can increase PMS symptoms and the menstrual cycle can be disrupted
- Energy levels can be low so sleep is important – moderate exercise is recommended
- B vitamins and vitamin C can help keep testosterone levels in check and may help prevent PMS system



Typical PMS Symptoms

- Swollen or tender breasts (this can start as early as ovulation)
- Fatigue
- Trouble sleeping
- Digestive upset, bloating, constipation and/or diarrhea,
- Headache or backache; a low-grade estrogen-related migraine is common – it last three days and painkillers have no effect
- Food cravings and increased appetite
- Joint and muscle aches
- Brain fog, inability to focus and concentrate, memory issues
- Mood swings, anger outbursts, general irritability – abnormal crying spells may also occur
- Anxiety and/or depression
- Acne

Luteal Phase



- Another factor for PMS is low progesterone causing a poor estrogen/progesterone ratio and increase PMS symptoms
- Increased cortisol blocks progesterone from locking onto its receptors sites – meaning the woman will not benefit from the progesterone - blood levels can still be normal
- Hormone Headaches: Known as low-grade migraines – caused by an estrogen/progesterone imbalance
- Common in luteal phase – last for three days – no pain med helps
- Licorice can help balance estrogen and progesterone and is an adrenal adaptogen to help keep cortisol in check – needs to be started at the time of ovulation or follicular

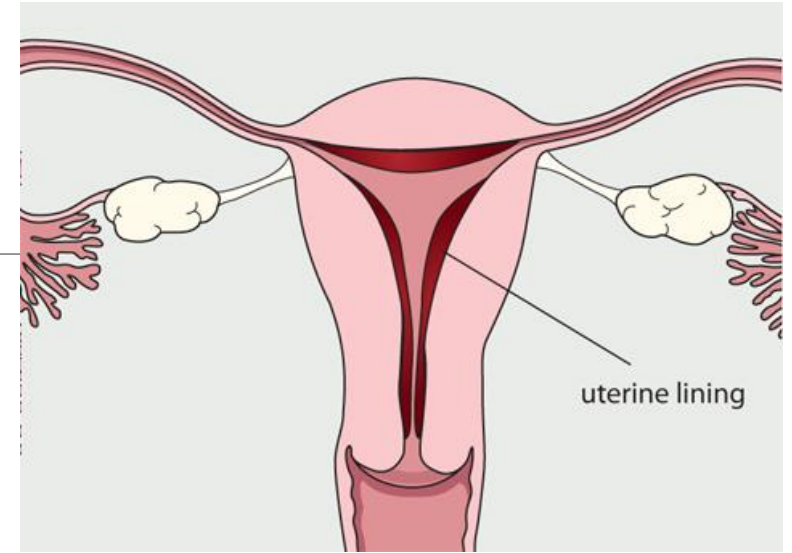
Luteal Phase

- It is easier to get Vitamin C in foods than B vitamins
- Fibre-rich complex carbs are important to keep blood sugar stable and plenty of fruits and vegetables
- Liver-friendly foods and probiotics
- Adrenal support
- Important note: Foods and supplements to support the key players all month long – problems in the luteal phase can be set up in the follicular phase



Menstrual Phase

- When pregnancy does not occur, the corpus luteum is reabsorbed into the body
- Progesterone production stops.
- The uterine lining will shed, which means bleeding will occur
- Estrogen will reach its highest level and then drop,
- This sends a signal to the hypothalamus to begin the cycle again



Menstrual Phase

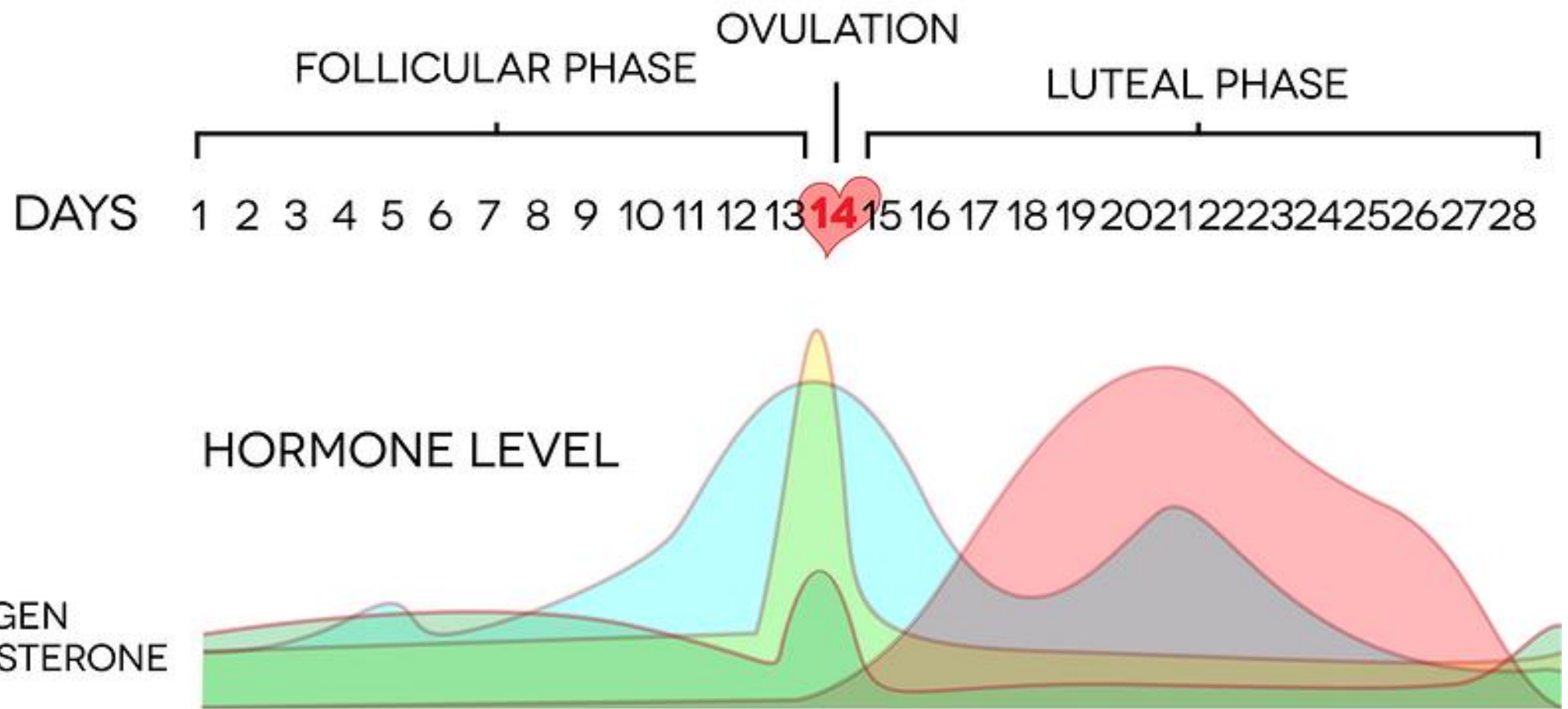
- During the period there will be combination of red and brown bleeding
- Women often experience lower backaches, fatigue, cravings and cramps
- Those who suffer from PMS will feel a sense of relief when the estrogen drops
- Estrogen dominant females will have more severe symptoms (because levels of estrogen have not dropped enough)
- Calcium, magnesium and bromelain can all help with cramps
- Regular sleep and light exercise is helpful
- EFAs and probiotics may help with inflammation



Menstrual Phase

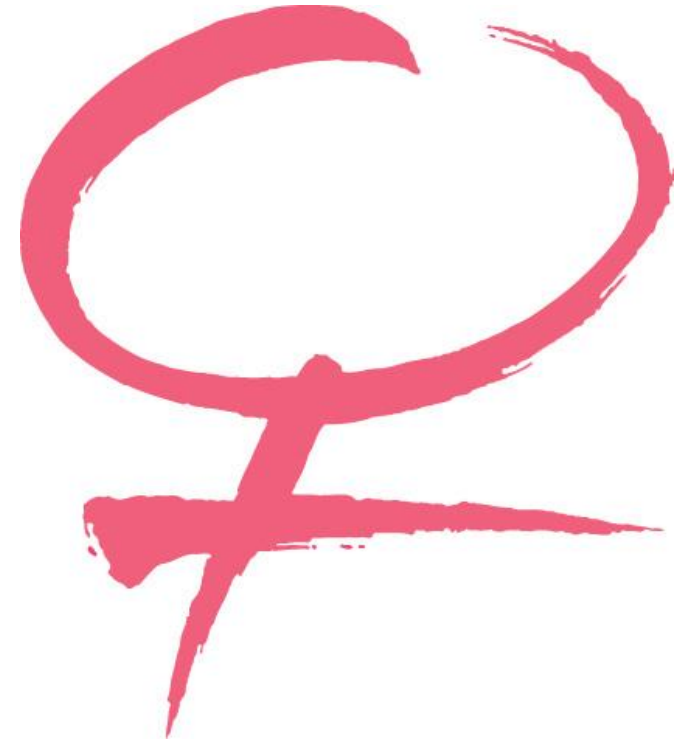
- Many women experience clarity of thought, intuition and gut feelings are strong
- The left and right sides of the brain are both working well
- Have clients keep track of their thoughts and ideas at this time
- Many women may even anxious to get started on their new ideas





Charting Ovulation

- Women should chart their cycle, know when they ovulate (or not) and be learn when symptoms occur
- This will help you help them more effectively
- Teaching them how to chart their cycle should be part of a hormone program
- The best way is to check temperature and cervical discharge



Charting The Cycle

- It is not just about fertility and getting pregnant
- Yeast problems can be noticed before they become an infection
- Estrogen dominant females often do not have regular periods or what is called the normal 28-day cycle
- Cycles can be 24-32 days – and this is considered normal
- Charting also allows for improvements to be noted



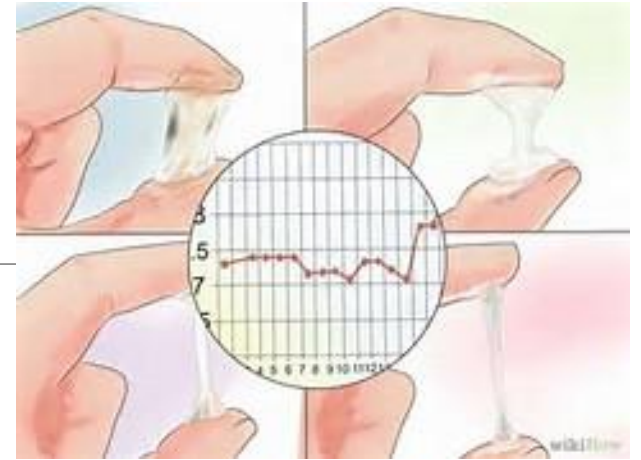
Temperature

- A basal thermometer is needed
- The temperature should be taken first thing every morning before the client gets out of bed
- Have them mark the temperature on the chart
- There is no specific temperature that needs to be reached to indicate ovulation.
- The client should be looking for a slightly elevated temperature for 3 days (about .4 degrees)
- She will have a fairly consistent temperature everyday except when she ovulates



Cervical Mucus

- In order to use cervical mucus as a means of determining ovulation, discharge must be charted everyday
- Ideally, if the client can abstain from sexual intercourse for one month to learn the characteristics of each stage, it will be easier
- To Check Cervical Mucus: Discharge will usually appear on underwear or toilet paper after using.
- If not, the client can insert a clean finger just inside the vagina.
- As the client practices observing the cervical mucus, she will learn to recognize the difference in each stage and be able to monitor when she is ovulating



4 Stages of Cervical Mucus

1. Immediately after the period are the “dry” days. There will be no discharge unless other issues are present such as Candidiasis or someone is overly estrogen dominant It can last for 3-4 days
2. The next stage produces a somewhat thick, white creamy discharge. This will last for at least a week until ovulation. As it gets closer to ovulation, it changes slightly and usually starts to dilute as ovulation time approaches but it remains non-transparent
3. Once ovulation begins, the discharge becomes transparent or clear like egg whites, and somewhat diluted making it more hospitable to sperm. Ovulation usually last 3 days
4. The final stage returns the discharge back to where it was before ovulation or for some women, it may even be dry and it remains this way until the period begins

Ovulation Kits

- Expensive basal thermometer kits - \$100 – 400 dollars
- Considered more accurate than a regular basal thermometer – some even connect with an app to your phone
- Clear Blue measures luteinizing hormone – considered 99% accurate
- Kits are for pregnancy, not necessarily monitoring a cycle for a woman with hormone issues



Areas of Focus

For A Healthy Cycle:

- Liver Foods
- Adrenal Foods
- Thyroid Foods
- Fibre Foods and Prebiotic Foods
- Fermented Foods



Area of Focus

- Stabilize Blood Sugar
- Steps To Good Digestion
- Reduce Stress
- Exercise
- Get Plenty of Good Quality Sleep



And Finally...

- This is the normal cycle
- This is probably not be the client you will have
- Understanding how things should work will help the client understand what is not working
- This should make it easier for you to help them understand what they need to do
- Hormone balancing takes time so knowing the normal function of the cycle helps them know the goal

