



UNDERSTANDING YOUR CYCLE

A simple introduction to the four phases

Understanding your cycle, understanding yourself.

THE LITTLE BEACH CLINIC



WELCOME

YOUR CYCLE IS INFORMATION

Your menstrual cycle is more than your period. It is a repeating pattern of hormonal change that can influence your energy, mood, sleep, appetite and how you feel in your body.

This guide offers a gentle introduction to the four phases. It is not about expecting yourself to feel the same way every month - it is about noticing your own patterns with curiosity.

Look for patterns, not perfection.

Cycle length and symptoms can vary. What matters is learning what is usual for you and noticing when something changes.



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THE FOUR PHASES

MENSTRUAL PHASE

REST & RESET

What is happening?

Day 1 is the first day of full bleeding. Oestrogen and progesterone are low, and the uterine lining is being shed. This phase often lasts around 3-7 days, although every cycle is individual.

You may notice

- Bleeding or cramps
- Lower energy or a greater need for rest
- Feeling more inward, reflective or sensitive



THE FOUR PHASES

MENSTRUAL PHASE - SUPPORT

GENTLE WAYS TO SUPPORT YOURSELF

Support your body

- Choose gentle movement if it feels good
- Try warmth, nourishing meals and iron-rich foods
- Make space for rest rather than pushing through

A little reminder

Your period is a useful monthly health signal. Pain that disrupts daily life, very heavy bleeding or a marked change from your usual pattern should not simply be dismissed as normal.



TWO WAYS TO READ YOUR CYCLE

WESTERN MEDICINE

QUESTIONS YOUR PATTERN MAY HELP TO GUIDE

From a Western medical perspective, recurring cycle patterns can identify questions that may be worth investigating.

Ovulation & cycle timing

Are cycles suggesting regular ovulation, delayed ovulation or possible anovulation?

Hormonal patterns

Symptoms may prompt consideration of oestrogen, progesterone, prolactin, thyroid function or androgen-related patterns where clinically appropriate.

The endometrium

Bleeding patterns can raise questions about how the uterine lining develops and sheds.

Iron & general health

Heavy or prolonged bleeding can contribute to iron deficiency and deserves appropriate assessment.

PCOS and other causes

Irregular or anovulatory cycles can have several causes. PCOS is one possibility, but not the only one.

The aim is not to order every test. It is to use your history and symptoms to decide what is clinically relevant.



TWO WAYS TO READ YOUR CYCLE

TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE

THE WHOLE PATTERN MATTERS

Traditional Chinese Medicine views the cycle as a dynamic process. It considers not only when you bleed, but the quality and timing of symptoms throughout the month.

Quality & timing

Flow, colour, clots, pain, spotting, temperature, sleep, energy and emotional changes are considered together rather than in isolation.

Patterns are individual

Two people with painful periods may be understood differently. The timing and character of pain, the bleed and accompanying symptoms help build the wider picture.

Integrated care

These traditional observations can sit alongside modern reproductive physiology and appropriate medical testing. TCM language is a framework for individual care, not a biomedical diagnosis.

The purpose is to build an individual picture and choose care accordingly - not to attach a diagnosis to one symptom.



THE FOUR PHASES

FOLLICULAR PHASE

ENERGY & GROWTH

What is happening?

Follicle-stimulating hormone (FSH) supports a group of follicles in the ovaries. One usually becomes dominant. As it develops, oestrogen rises and the uterine lining begins to rebuild.

You may notice

- Energy may begin to rise after your period
- More motivation, curiosity or mental clarity
- Changing cervical mucus as ovulation approaches



THE FOUR PHASES

FOLLICULAR PHASE - SUPPORT

GENTLE WAYS TO SUPPORT YOURSELF

Support your body

- Build activity gradually and follow your energy
- Include protein, colourful plants and regular meals
- Notice cervical mucus and other recurring patterns

A little reminder

The follicular phase can vary in length. Ovulation is not automatically on day 14, so your own signs matter more than a calendar assumption.



THE FOUR PHASES

OVULATION

CONFIDENCE & CONNECTION

What is happening?

A rise in luteinising hormone (LH) triggers the mature follicle to release an egg. The fertile window is the five days before ovulation and the day of ovulation because sperm can survive for several days, while the egg has a much shorter lifespan.

You may notice

- Slippery, clear or stretchy cervical mucus
- A possible increase in energy, confidence or libido
- A sustained basal body temperature rise after ovulation



THE FOUR PHASES

OVULATION - SUPPORT

GENTLE WAYS TO SUPPORT YOURSELF

Support your body

- If trying to conceive, include the days before ovulation
- Record mucus, LH tests or temperature if useful
- Stay hydrated and avoid making one sign carry all the meaning

A little reminder

Basal body temperature confirms ovulation only after it has happened. Cervical mucus and LH testing can help identify that ovulation is approaching.



THE FOUR PHASES

LUTEAL PHASE

NURTURE & PREPARE

What is happening?

After ovulation, the emptied follicle becomes the corpus luteum. It produces progesterone, which supports the uterine lining. If pregnancy does not occur, progesterone and oestrogen fall and the next period begins.

You may notice

- A warmer basal body temperature
- A natural shift towards steadier or lower energy
- Breast tenderness, bloating, appetite or mood changes



THE FOUR PHASES

LUTEAL PHASE - SUPPORT

GENTLE WAYS TO SUPPORT YOURSELF

Support your body

- Prioritise regular meals, sleep and recovery
- Choose movement that suits how you feel
- Track symptoms without assuming all discomfort is normal

A little reminder

Progesterone after ovulation is largely a reflection of what happened before and during ovulation. Significant or worsening luteal symptoms deserve a fuller look, not blame.



QUICK REFERENCE

YOUR CYCLE AT A GLANCE

MENSTRUAL

Bleeding begins

Rest & observe

FOLLICULAR

Oestrogen rises

Build & explore

OVULATION

Egg is released

Connect & notice

LUTEAL

Progesterone leads

Nurture & prepare

Cycle phases are not equal quarters, and they do not have to fit a 28-day template.



SIMPLE AWARENESS

WHAT COULD YOU NOTICE?

- First day of full bleeding and total cycle length
- Bleeding pattern: flow, colour, clots and spotting
- Cervical mucus changes
- Basal body temperature, if you choose to chart it
- Energy, mood, sleep, appetite and digestion
- Pain, breast tenderness, headaches or bloating

Tracking should help you understand your body - not make you anxious. Choose only the signs that feel useful and sustainable.



YOUR CYCLE CHECK-IN

ONE MONTH OF GENTLE OBSERVATION

Cycle day / date

Bleeding or spotting

Cervical mucus

Energy (low - high)

Mood

Sleep

Body symptoms

Anything else I noticed



WHEN SUPPORT MAY BE HELPFUL

- Periods are very painful, very heavy or regularly disrupt daily life
- Cycles are consistently very short, very long or unpredictable
- Periods have stopped unexpectedly
- You regularly bleed between periods or after sex
- Premenstrual symptoms significantly affect wellbeing
- You are trying to conceive and would like individual guidance

This guide is educational and is not a diagnosis. New, severe or worrying symptoms should be discussed with an appropriate healthcare professional.



WANT TO GO DEEPER?

THE COMPLETE CYCLE GUIDE

The free guide gives you the foundations. The complete guide will take you further into understanding your patterns and the questions they may raise.

Inside the complete guide

- More detailed tracking and interpretation
- What cycle signs may be asking you to explore
- Western and Chinese medicine perspectives
- Questions to take to your practitioner
- Practical, education-first next steps

Coming soon from The Little Beach Clinic.



WOULD YOU LIKE SUPPORT?

Whether you need support understanding your cycle or navigating your fertility, you can find me at The Little Beach Clinic.

BOOK A CONSULTATION

thelittlebeachclinic.co.uk

[@thelittlebeachclinic](https://www.instagram.com/thelittlebeachclinic)

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