

# UNDERSTANDING FERTILITY AND YOUR MENSTRUAL CYCLE

*Menstrual*

*Follicular*

*Luteal*

*Ovulation*

# Menstrual Phase

The uterine lining is shed and flows through the cervix to the vagina and out. This is the red discharge that we often associate with “Period blood”. Period blood contains cells from the uterine lining, blood and cervical mucus. This process will typically take 3-7 days



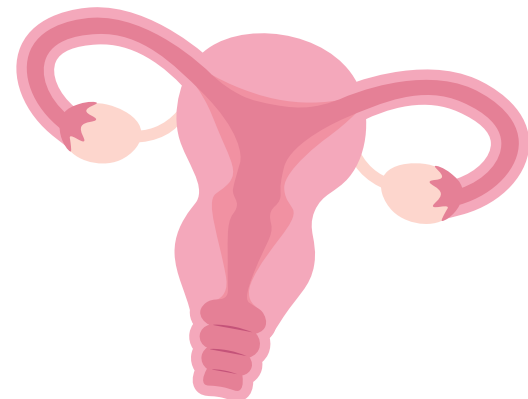
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SAMANTHA LEIGH**

# Follicular Phase

The follicular phase overlaps the menstrual phase, and begins on the first day of your period. It will continue throughout your period and end on the day you ovulate. During the follicular phase your estrogen rises, causing the uterine lining to thicken.

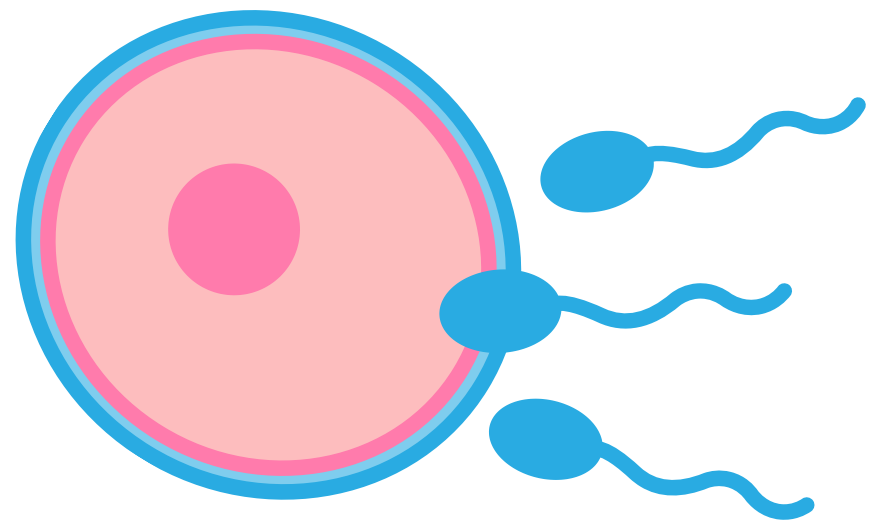
Additionally, the hormone FSH (Follicle-stimulating hormone) also rises, stimulating the remaining eggs in your ovaries to grow. During days 10-14 one of the developing follicles will mature into a fully matured egg (ovum).

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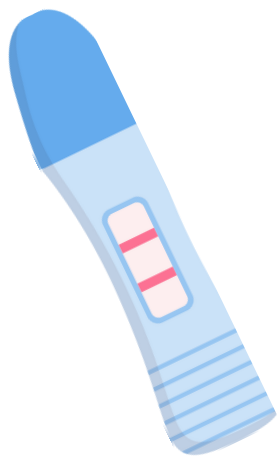


# Ovulation Phase

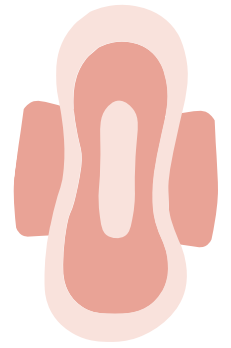
Ovulation occurs around day 14 of your menstrual cycle. Your body will experience a quick onset increase of the luteinizing hormone (LH), causing the ovary to release the matured ovum. This phase is the most important when trying to conceive.



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# Luteal Phase



The Luteal phase spans from day 15 to 28. This is the last phase in the cycle. The matured ovum leaves the ovary and travels through the fallopian tube. Your progesterone hormone level will increase as your uterus prepares to implantation of the ovum. The ovum and sperm will meet in the fallopian tube, and this is where conception happens. If the egg is successfully fertilized by the sperm it will move into the uterus and attach itself to the thickened uterine lining, also known as implantation. An unsuccessful egg will not attach itself and will instead be filtered out during your next period.

If pregnancy does not occur, estrogen and progesterone levels drop back to baseline and the thickened lining of the uterus will shed and the cycle will start from point one.