

TOP TEN REASONS TO USE NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING

1. It is green, organic, and natural: No added hormones or devices are used.
2. It is comparatively inexpensive: It has a one-time cost rather than continual costs.
3. It strengthens a couple's relationship: It fosters communication and intimacy.
4. It is a shared responsibility: The couple becomes a fertility team.
5. It is effective: It successfully helps couples avoid or achieve pregnancy.
6. It is empowering: It teaches women and men about their bodies.
7. It is a diagnostic tool: It helps identify and treat gynecological and reproductive disorders.
8. It is simple and easy to learn: Any woman with any type of cycle can use it.
9. It is counter-cultural: It provides freedom to express authentic love.
10. It keeps with the Catholic Church's teaching on human sexuality: It upholds God's design for sex as unitive and procreative.



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1. IT IS GREEN, ORGANIC, AND NATURAL: NO ADDED HORMONES OR DEVICES ARE USED.

NFP does not change the human body in any way but works in harmony with it. NFP does not have any of the negative side effects that hormonal birth control and intrauterine devices have been shown to have for women. There are research studies indicating that hormonal contraceptives can increase the risk for breast cancer, cervical cancer, blood clots, Crohn's disease, SLE (lupus), depression, and yet other health problems. Insertion of an IUD can result in perforation of the uterus. IUDs can cause altered menstrual bleeding patterns, including irregular and/or heavy bleeding, as well as cramping. Women have a right to know how to avoid such health risks by using NFP.

Additionally, estrogenic substances released into waterways are known to have adverse effects on wildlife, such as causing the feminization of male fish. The estrogen excreted by women taking oral contraceptives contributes to this environmental problem. NFP has no negative effects on the environment.

References:

- W. Williams et al., "Hormonally Active Contraceptives Part I: Risks Acknowledged and Unacknowledged," *Linacre Quarterly* 88/2 (2021): 126-48.
- UpToDate, *Intrauterine contraception: Management of side effects and complications* (2019).
- Gonsioroski et al., "Endocrine Disruptors in Water and Their Effects on the Reproductive System," *International Journal of Molecular Science* 21/6 (March 2020): 1929.



2. IT IS COMPARATIVELY INEXPENSIVE: IT HAS A ONE-TIME COST RATHER THAN CONTINUAL COSTS.

The one-time cost to learn to practice a method of NFP (which varies from one method to another) is relatively inexpensive in comparison to the on-going costs of birth control pills, Intrauterine Devices, or other forms of birth control. Fees for NFP instruction can sometimes be waived or reduced if they prove to be a financial burden.

References:

- G. Freundl et al., "State-of-the-art of non-hormonal contraception: IV. Natural Family Planning," *European Journal of Contraception and Reproductive Health Care* 15 (April 2010): 113-23.



3. IT STRENGTHENS A COUPLE'S RELATIONSHIP: IT FOSTERS COMMUNICATION AND INTIMACY.

The effective use of NFP requires a couple to be in regular communication regarding their shared fertility. Honest and open communication is an essential element to every loving and lasting marriage. NFP also helps couples accept each other for who they are and treat each other with mutual respect. Furthermore, when a couple has discerned a need to avoid conception, the periods of abstinence provide opportunities to grow in other expressions of intimacy (e.g. emotional, intellectual, and spiritual intimacy). These aspects of using NFP help foster a strong couple relationship.

References:

- L. VandeVusse et al., "Couples' Views of the Effects of Natural Family Planning on Marital Dynamics," *Journal of Nursing Scholarship* 35/2 (2003): 171-6.



4.

IT IS A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY: THE COUPLE BECOMES A FERTILITY TEAM.

Men are fertile all the time while women are fertile for only a few days during each menstrual cycle. NFP teaches the couple how to daily recognize and consider their combined fertility—their ability to conceive new life together. In practicing NFP, each spouse accepts a significant role and responsibility for the effectiveness of the method. Recognizing their combined fertility, husbands and wives team-up in planning their family and discerning God's will for them.

- References:
- L. VandeVusse et al., "Couples' Views of the Effects of Natural Family Planning on Marital Dynamics," *Journal of Nursing Scholarship* 35/2 (2003): 171-6.

5.

IT IS EFFECTIVE: IT SUCCESSFULLY HELPS COUPLES AVOID OR ACHIEVE PREGNANCY.

Modern methods of NFP are rooted in a solid scientific understanding of the variations in fertility throughout a woman's menstrual cycle. NFP methods have been shown to be from 95% to better than 99% effective in preventing pregnancy when used correctly and consistently (perfect use). If a method is used as the average person does, that is, sometimes incorrectly or inconsistently (typical use), the percent of effectiveness in preventing pregnancy can still range in the eighties and nineties. By identifying days of fertility, practicing NFP can also successfully aid couples who wish to achieve pregnancy.

- References:
- M. Manhart et al., "Fertility awareness-based methods of family planning: A review of effectiveness for avoiding pregnancy using SORT," *Osteopathic Family Physician* 5/1 (2013): 2-8.
 - R.P. Urratia et al., "Effectiveness of Fertility Awareness-Based Methods for Pregnancy Prevention: A Systematic Review," *Obstetrics and Gynecology* 132/3 (Sept. 2018): 591-604.
 - Fertility Appreciation Collaborative to Teach the Science, "The Creighton Model" (2014).

6.

IT IS EMPOWERING: IT TEACHES WOMEN AND MEN ABOUT THEIR BODIES.

There is something amazing about understanding how the male and female reproductive systems work. Using NFP, couples work together to understand their combined fertility and make decisions accordingly. This natural health system empowers people by taking control of their fertility and making decisions based on their biological markers. It is a cooperative system that works with a woman's fertility, instead of against it.

- References:
- Urrutia and Polis, "Fertility awareness based methods for pregnancy prevention," *British Medical Journal* 366 (July 11, 2019).

7.

IT IS A DIAGNOSTIC TOOL: IT HELPS IDENTIFY AND TREAT GYNECOLOGICAL AND REPRODUCTIVE DISORDERS.

In addition to being used for family planning, NFP can be beneficial to single or married women who encounter gynecological or reproductive disorders. Doctors can address problems more effectively if the woman/couple has been charting her fertility cycle. Disorders such as endometriosis, polycystic ovarian disease, premenstrual syndrome (PMS), postpartum depression, irregular or abnormal bleeding, recurrent miscarriages, infertility, and many others can be discovered and treated through the practice of NFP and the associated medical science (e.g. NaProTECHNOLOGY).

- References:
- www.naprotechnology.com
 - www.popepaulvi.com/PDF/NaPro-vs-ART.pdf

8.

IT IS SIMPLE AND EASY TO LEARN: ANY WOMAN WITH ANY TYPE OF CYCLE CAN USE IT.

NFP offers a variety of reliable and effective methods. Due to advances in science and technology, NFP works with menstrual cycles of any length and with irregular cycles, and can be used by women who are breastfeeding or perimenopausal. NFP is not the old rhythm or calendar method, which was only effective for women with regular cycles. The latest methods are easy to learn and easy to interpret for women and couples in all situations.

- References:
- fertilitycarerochester.weebly.com/Creighton-model.html
 - www.marquette.edu/nursing/natural-family-planning-model.php
 - Couple to Couple League, *The Art of Natural Family Planning Transitions Student Guide* (2013).

9.

IT IS COUNTER-CULTURAL: IT PROVIDES FREEDOM TO EXPRESS AUTHENTIC LOVE.

We live in a society where there seems to be a pill for everything, including one for birth control. This pill promises freedom, yet takes away freedom in the sense that it teaches a couple that fertility is out of their control—that they can't master their sexual desires. On the contrary, NFP helps couples develop self-control and be free to authentically express total self-giving love to each other, especially in the sexual act.

- References:
- Simcha Fisher, *The Sinner's Guide to Natural Family Planning*, Our Sunday Visitor, 2014.
 - Mary Eberstadt, *Adam and Eve after the Pill: Paradoxes of the Sexual Revolution*, Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 2012.
 - Christopher West, *Good News About Sex & Marriage: Answers to Your Honest Questions About Catholic Teaching*, Servant Books, Ann Arbor, MI, 2018.
 - Christopher West, *Theology of the Body for Beginners: Rediscovering the Meaning of Life, Love, Sex, and Gender*, Ascension Press, 2018.



10.

IT KEEPS WITH THE CATHOLIC CHURCH'S TEACHING ON HUMAN SEXUALITY: IT UPHOLDS GOD'S DESIGN FOR SEX AS UNITIVE AND PROCREATIVE.

God created marriage and sexuality for our good. In Christian marriage, a husband and wife promise to give themselves freely and completely to each other, without reservation, and to remain faithful and open to life. NFP allows the married couple to uphold all these marriage vows. The Catholic Church teaches that all acts of sexual intercourse, in order to reach their most authentic God-given meaning, must be both unitive (bringing the couple closer to each other and God) and procreative (open to the possibility of a new life being conceived). NFP does not obstruct the unitive or procreative aspects of sex. Therefore, it allows couples to plan their families in accordance with God's design for marriage and sexuality.

- References:
- St. Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae* (1968).
 - *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd ed. (1997), nos. 2360-70.

