

## Session 3

# Combining Female and Male Fertility: Fertilization

### Objectives

By the end of this session, the participants will:

1. Describe three things that must occur for a girl or woman to get pregnant.
2. Define fertilization and pregnancy.
3. Understand the importance of recognizing signs of fertility.



### Materials Needed

- Scissors
- Tape
- Flash Cards

There are two options: 1) to make a fertility awareness necklace; or 2) to draw a paper copy of the fertility awareness necklace if beads are not readily available.

1) Materials to Make a Fertility Awareness Necklace:  
For each participant and yourself, provide: A copy of the How to Make the Fertility Awareness Necklace with Beads handout (page 90), a copy of the How to Use the Necklace as a Way to Track the Menstrual Cycle handout (page 93), one plastic bag or small container, 1 red bead, 19 dark beads, 12 white or light beads, and 30-60 centimeters of string (depends on the size of the beads). All beads should be approximately the same size. The beads should be made of material that can be marked on with a pencil or other marker.

### Facilitator Note

The beads might be difficult to find in your setting. If this is the case, you have the option of drawing a paper copy of the necklace.

2) Materials to Draw the Fertility Awareness Necklace: For each participant and yourself, provide: A copy of the How to Draw a Paper Version of the Fertility Awareness Necklace handout (page 91), a copy of the How to Use the Necklace as a Way to Track the Menstrual Cycle handout (page 93), and coloring pencils or crayons in red, a dark color (such as brown), and a light color (such as yellow).

## Session 3

### Before You Begin

- Carefully read all of **Content for Session 2** (pages 44-54) and **Session 3** (pages 80-95).
- Read each step of the session. Think about how you will perform each step and what you will add to every session.
- For Step 1, prepare 31 flash cards (one for each day) like the Menstrual Cycle Review Flash Cards handout (pages 82-89). You can cut out the cards from the page or make your own using these as a guide.

For Making the Bead Necklace:

- Divide the beads into sets, being sure that each participant has 1 red bead, 19 dark beads, and 12 light or white beads. Each participant also should have a piece of string 30-60 centimeters long. Place each set of beads and string in plastic bags or small containers.
- Prepare photocopies of How to Make the Fertility Awareness Necklace with Beads handout (page 90) and How to Use the Necklace as a Way to Track the Menstrual Cycle handout (page 93) for each participant.
- Make one necklace for yourself.

For Making the Paper Necklace:

- Provide participants with the How to Draw a Paper Version of the Fertility Awareness Necklace handout (page 91) and How to Use the Necklace as a Way to Track the Menstrual Cycle handout (page 93), as well as coloring pencils or crayons. You will need coloring pencils for each participant as described on the previous page.



### Time

Activity	Minutes
Step 1: Menstrual Cycle Review Using Flash Cards	20
Step 2: How Does a Woman Get Pregnant?	15
Step 3: Make Your Own Necklace	45
Step 4: Question and Answer Using the Necklace	25
Step 5: Take-Home Messages	20
<b>TOTAL MINUTES</b>	<b>125</b>

## Step 1: Menstrual Cycle Review Using Flash Cards

### Large Group Discussion (20 minutes)

Take the flash cards you have prepared for this step. Give each participant a flash card with a number (and picture) on it. If there are not enough people, have some people take more than one card. Have each person tape the flash cards to his or her chest. Ask all participants to form a circle in the order of the numbers on their cards.

Tell the group that they will pretend to be a menstrual cycle that lasts 31 days for a woman named Sarah. Stress again that not all cycles last 31 days; some are shorter and some are longer, but they are just going to look at Sarah's cycle, which usually lasts 31 days.

Ask each participant to look at his or her flash card(s). Ask each participant to say what is happening on his or her card(s). Once they describe the picture, ask them to state why they think this is happening. Pose the following questions to each participant. The answers are in parentheses:

- What is happening to Sarah on Days 1 through 6? (*She is having her period.*)
- What is happening to Sarah on Days 11 through 17? (*She may be having secretions, and she may feel wetness. With each passing day, it is more likely that she will have secretions.*)
- What is the purpose of secretions? (*They protect and nourish sperm and aid them to travel toward the egg.*)
- What is happening to Sarah on Day 15? (*She is ovulating.*)
- What is happening to Sarah in her vaginal area on Days 30 through 31? (*She has no secretions.*)
- What is happening to the rest of Sarah's body on Days 30 through 31? (*She may have a backache, headache, skin problems, bloating, food cravings, etc.*)
- What is happening on what would have been Day 32? (*She starts her period again. This is the beginning of her next cycle.*)

Emphasize again to the participants that a woman's menstrual cycle happens in phases

1. She has her period and bleeds.
2. There is no bleeding for a few days.
3. She may start to have secretions.
4. She ovulates.
5. She has no secretions.

6. She may start to experience bodily or emotional changes just before her next period.
7. The cycle starts all over again.

## Step 2: How Does a Woman Get Pregnant?

### Large Group Discussion (15 minutes)

Tell the group that now that they know about female and male fertility, they are going to talk about what happens when female and male fertility are combined.

Ask participants to volunteer common stories of how babies are made. Common ones include:

- Babies drop from heaven.
- Babies come from the airplane.
- Babies come out of the nurse's or doctor's bag.

Next, ask a participant to volunteer to stand up and demonstrate the real way in which a baby is conceived using their hands as props (demonstrate this yourself).

To reinforce the point, show participants how to create puppets with their hands to show fertilization. They should:

- Hold up their right hand and wave it back and forward like a worm to represent the sperm.
- Hold up their left hand like a fist to represent the egg.

Repeat the following sentence:

*I was conceived when my parents had sexual intercourse and the sperm from my father (wave the right hand like a worm or sperm) and the egg from my mother (fist the left hand) came together (join your hands) and created me.*

Have participants repeat this a few times. Make it fun.

Draw an egg and sperm on the flip chart or chalkboard.

Emphasize that there are three things that must happen for a pregnancy to occur: 1) an egg must be present in one of the woman's fallopian tubes; 2) sperm from the male must join the egg to fertilize it; and 3) the fertilized egg must attach itself to the lining of the woman's uterus.

Point out that everyone in the room was conceived through the act of sexual intercourse.

Ask participants:

- What is sex or sexual intercourse?

This is just to open up discussion. Encourage them to offer what they know about the process and let them know that they will study this further during the session.

#### **Stress the Following**

- The time when the union between the egg and the sperm occurs is called *fertilization*.
- Sperm enters a woman's vagina through *sexual intercourse* with a man.
- The egg must be released from the ovary and be present in the fallopian tube. The egg is usually released around the middle of her menstrual cycle, but one cannot predict exactly what day this will be. A woman's egg only survives in the fallopian tube for 24 hours after it is released from her ovaries, while the sperm can survive up to six days.

### **Step 3: Make Your Own Necklace**

#### **Self-Exercise (45 minutes)**

There are two possible versions for this exercise. In the first version, participants will make a fertility awareness necklace using beads and string. If you do not have materials for making a necklace, you should use the second version in which participants draw a necklace on a handout.

### To Make the Necklace Using Beads:

Distribute the How to Make the Fertility Awareness Necklace with Beads handout as well as one set of necklace materials to each participant.

Go over the directions for making the necklace. Let them know that they will use this later to learn more about fertility.

Ask each person to make a necklace using the handout as a guide.

### To Draw the Necklace:

Distribute the How to Draw a Paper Version of the Fertility Awareness Necklace handout as well as coloring pencils or crayons.

Go over the directions for drawing the necklace. Let them know that they will use this later to learn more about fertility.

Ask each person to draw a necklace using the handout as a guide.

#### **Facilitator Note**

If you are unable to copy the handout for drawing the necklace, you can have the participants draw the necklace on a blank sheet of paper using coloring pencils or crayons.

## **Step 4: Question and Answer Using the Necklace**

### **Large Group Discussion (25 minutes)**

Distribute the How to Use the Necklace as a Way to Track the Menstrual Cycle handout. Ask each participant to take turns reading the handout.

Using either your bead or paper necklace as an example, state the following:

- Look at the red bead (*show the group the red bead*).

This represents Day 1 of the menstrual cycle, the day on which bleeding begins.

- After the red bead, there are six dark beads (*show the group*). A woman has her period during some or all of these days. During this time, a woman's body is not yet ready to receive a fertilized egg. These days are infertile days, when a woman cannot get pregnant even if she has sexual intercourse.
- After these dark beads, there are 12 white or light beads (*show the group*), which are the fertile days. These are the days when a woman can get pregnant if she has sex. You will notice that there are 12 white or light beads in this necklace even though a woman can usually become pregnant for only five to six days each cycle. A woman is fertile for only 24 hours, but because sperm can stay alive for up to six days in the fallopian tube and wait to fertilize the egg, a woman can become pregnant for up to six days. We use 12 beads because we do not know exactly which days these are. These 12 beads represent the approximate time of fertility.
- After these white or light beads, there are 13 more dark beads (*show the group*). These are the days that are infertile days.
- Some women use this necklace to help them keep track of their menstrual cycle and identify the days on which they may be fertile. It will also help them know when to expect their period.

Pose the following questions to the group to confirm comprehension. Ask them to demonstrate on their necklaces while giving their answers:

- Mary has her period today; on what bead should she make a mark? (*Red bead.*)
- If she makes a mark on the next bead every day, on what color bead would she make a mark in six days? (*Dark bead.*) In twelve days? (*White or light bead.*)

- Mary would like to get pregnant. What color beads represent the days when she is fertile (could get pregnant if she has sexual intercourse)? (*White beads.*)
- Mary does not want to get pregnant. What color beads represent the days when she is infertile (could not get pregnant if she has sexual intercourse)? (*Dark beads.*)
- What should Mary do when she gets her period again? (*She should erase all the marks on the beads and make a mark on the red bead again. Or, she should draw another necklace and make a mark on the red bead.*)

#### Facilitator Note

Women with regular menstrual cycles and supportive partners can use a necklace called CycleBeads™ as a family planning method. However, in order to do this, additional screening and counseling is needed to ensure the method will meet their needs and is used correctly.

## Step 5: Take-Home Messages (20 minutes)

Close the session by stressing the following:

- The union of a sperm and an egg is called fertilization.
- A woman can only get pregnant on certain days of the month. These are called *fertile days*. On other days, she cannot get pregnant. These are *infertile days*.

Every time a woman has sexual intercourse during her fertile days, she has a chance of becoming pregnant.

A woman is capable of getting pregnant as long as she continues to have her menstrual cycle. When she reaches menopause, she stops menstruating and thus cannot get pregnant.

Even though a girl who has started to menstruate is physically capable of getting pregnant, it is best that she wait to have sex until she is physically and mentally prepared for sex and having a baby.

A male who has reached puberty can get a woman pregnant for the rest of his life. He is fertile every day.

### **Stress the Following**

Thank them for being an enthusiastic group. Tell them that it is hard to talk about one's body sometimes, and that you are proud of them for participating and sharing with each other.

## Session 3

### **Possible Questions and Answers**

#### **Fertilization and Pregnancy**

**Q. Why are there some women who cannot get pregnant?**

**A.** Infertility—or not being able to get pregnant—may be caused by: hormonal problems in the man, woman, or both; blocked fallopian tubes; low sperm count in the man; or older age. Sometimes doctors cannot determine the cause of permanent infertility.

**Q. Can a girl get pregnant during her period?**

**A.** Yes, it is possible although not common. It depends on the length of her cycle, how many days her period lasts, and when she has sexual intercourse, because the sperm can stay alive up to six days in the body.

**Q. Can a girl become pregnant before she has her first period?**

**A.** Before a girl's first period, her ovaries release the first egg during ovulation. She can become pregnant if she has intercourse around the time of her first ovulation, before she has her first menstrual period.

**Q. From what age can a girl get pregnant?**

**A.** When a girl starts having menstrual periods it means that her reproductive organs have begun working and that she can become pregnant if she has sexual intercourse. It does not mean she is ready to have a baby, only that she is physically capable of getting pregnant.

**Q. Can a girl become pregnant even if she does not have sexual intercourse?**

**A.** There is no evidence to prove that if a boy's penis goes near a girl's vagina and he ejaculates that she will get pregnant. However, if there is contact between a boy's penis and a girl's outer genitalia, sometimes it is possible to get a sexually transmitted infection.

**Q. What causes a woman to have twins?**

**A.** The explanation depends on whether the twins are fraternal or identical. Fraternal twins may resemble each other, but are not "identical." They may be of either the same or different sexes. They occur when two eggs are in the fallopian tubes at the same time and are fertilized by two separate sperm cells. Identical twins, always of the same sex and same appearance, occur after fertilization when a single developing egg divides in two.

**Q. What determines whether the baby is a boy or a girl?**

**A.** When a human egg is fertilized with sperm, the sex of the baby is determined immediately. Sperm contain agents called "chromosomes." There are two types of chromosomes—either an X or a Y. If the sperm contains a Y chromosome, the child will be male; if it contains only an X chromosome, the child will be female. The man's sperm determines whether the baby is a boy or a girl.

**Q. What are the things I should think about before getting pregnant?**

**A.** Having a baby is a very serious issue to consider. A young mother-to-be would have to ask herself the following questions:

- **Am I emotionally ready?** A child needs attention 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It takes a lot of patience and attention.
- **Am I financially ready?** A young mother or couple would have to find a source of money to pay for the baby's daily needs—food, medicine, clothes, childcare—as well as the mother's own needs.
- **Am I willing to compromise my education?** It is very difficult to raise a baby while going to school. Many young girls find that they have to drop out of school and ultimately give up their plans for the future after having a baby.
- **Will the father of the baby support me?** It is very difficult to raise a child without a father. Single mothers often struggle to support themselves and their children financially and emotionally, and many young women are forced to depend on their parents or others for such assistance.
- **Do your parents or caregivers want you to have a child? Will they help you?** If a young mother tries to stay in school or needs to work, she will need help in taking care of the baby.
- **What do my culture and religion say about a young unmarried woman having a baby?** In many cultures, young unmarried women who have babies are disapproved of and may even be discriminated against.

## Sex

### **Q. Does sex hurt for a woman?**

**A.** Some women do not experience pain the first time they have intercourse and others do. Everyone is different.

### **Q. Does a woman always bleed when she has sex for the first time?**

**A.** No. Some women bleed when they have sex for the first time; others do not. Absence of bleeding the first time one has sexual intercourse is not a sign that one was not a virgin.

### **Q. What happens to semen after it has been ejaculated into a woman's vagina?**

**A.** Semen, if ejaculated into the vagina, could travel into the uterus, seep out, eventually dry up, or all three. Semen that remains in the body will carry sperm that can survive in the body for up to six days. When semen evaporates in the open air, the sperm it contains die.

### **Q. Does a girl lose her virginity if she sticks her finger in her vagina?**

**A.** No. Most people agree that women and men lose their virginity the first time they have sexual intercourse.

### **Q. What is an orgasm?**

**A.** When a man has an orgasm, his penis gets larger and hard, and semen comes out. Then his penis gets smaller and soft again. The orgasm takes about five to 20 seconds. When a woman has a vaginal orgasm, her vagina squeezes together. It lasts about the same time as a man's orgasm, but can last longer. A woman can also have an orgasm when her clitoris is stimulated, either through masturbation or during sexual intercourse. A woman can get pregnant even if she does not have an orgasm.

**Q. Do people ever have sex any way except for the man's penis to be inserted in the woman's vagina?**

**A.** People express their sexual feelings in many different ways. It depends on their own feelings and the way they, their culture, and partners feel about sex.

**Q. When is a good age to have sex?**

**A.** Having sex for the first time can be an important emotional event. There are many questions that should be considered before actually doing it:

- Am I really ready to have sex?
- How will I feel about myself after I have sex?
- How will I feel about my partner afterward?
- Am I having sex for the right reasons?
- How will my parents and friends feel about me having sex?
- What do my religion and culture say about sex and sex before marriage?
- How will I protect myself against unintended pregnancy or infection?
- If I have sex, will I have to lie about it later?
- Will I feel guilty?

**Q. Can a man get a woman pregnant if he removes his penis from her vagina before he ejaculates?**

**A.** Yes. Sometimes even before he ejaculates, a tiny bit of fluid comes out of the penis, called pre-ejaculate, that contains sperm.

### Emotions around Sex

**Q. What is the difference between being in love and having sex?**

**A.** There is no "right" definition of love for everybody. Being in love with someone involves feelings of

romance, attraction, caring, etc. Having sex is an event or physical act.

### Family Planning (Contraceptives)

#### Q. How do couples prevent pregnancy?

**A.** When a man and a woman want to have sexual intercourse without having a child, they can use a family planning method to prevent pregnancy. There are many types of family planning methods, also called contraceptives. The couple's choice is based on physical and emotional reasons. A couple can also avoid a pregnancy by abstaining from sex during the woman's fertile time, if they know when she is fertile.

When a couple is using a family planning method correctly, this means they are "protected." Unprotected sexual intercourse means sex without any contraception.

#### Q. What kinds of family planning methods are there?

**A.** [Note: If someone poses this question and samples of family planning methods are available, show them while offering an explanation of the methods.]

- **Abstinence.** Abstinence is the total avoidance of sexual intercourse between partners. It is the safest and most effective way to prevent pregnancy and STIs.
- **Male Condom.** The male condom is a thin rubber tube. It is closed at one end like the finger of a glove so that when a man puts it over his penis, it stops the sperm from entering a woman's vagina.
- **Female Condom.** The female condom is a rubber sheath that fits inside the vagina and covers the vulva, preventing sperm from entering a woman's vagina.
- **Intrauterine Device (IUD) or Intrauterine Copper Device (IUCD).** IUDs (sometimes called coils or spirals) are small plastic or metal devices of varying

shapes and sizes that are placed in the uterus to prevent pregnancy.

- **Diaphragm.** The diaphragm is a shallow, dome-shaped rubber cup with a flexible rim. It fits into the vagina and over the cervix, keeping sperm from joining the egg. It is most effective when used with spermicidal cream, jelly, or foam.
- **Oral Contraceptives.** Oral contraceptives (sometimes called birth control pills or “the pill”) contain hormones. These pills stop the release of an egg every month—but do not stop periods. A woman must take all of the pills in each pack to be fully protected.
- **Injectable Hormonal Contraceptives (Injectables).** The injection works the same as the pill. However, a woman receives a shot every eight or twelve weeks (depending on the type of injectable used) instead of taking a pill every day. Common names for these contraceptives are DMPA, Depo-Provera, and NET-EN.
- **Emergency Contraceptive Pills (ECPs).** Often called the “morning-after pill” or postcoital contraception, ECPs can reduce the risk of pregnancy after unprotected sexual intercourse. They work by using increased doses of certain oral contraceptive pills within 72 hours after sexual intercourse. The sooner ECPs are taken after unprotected sexual intercourse, the greater their effectiveness.
- **Lactational Amenorrhea Method (LAM).** LAM suppresses ovulation because breastfeeding changes the body’s physiology so that ovulation does not occur. Women who are exclusively using breastfeeding as the baby’s nutrition can use this method.
- **Natural Family Planning and Fertility Awareness Methods.** These are methods by which couples time sexual intercourse to avoid the woman’s days of fertility in her menstrual cycle. Women with regular menstrual cycles can use the necklace as a family

planning method to identify when a woman is fertile. Other women may want to use other ways to know which are their fertile days. They can check each day to see whether or not they have secretions. If they do, they will know that they are fertile on those days. They can also take their temperatures to determine when they are ovulating.

- **Spermicides.** Spermicides are chemical agents inserted into the vagina that keep sperm from traveling up into the cervix.
- **Male Sterilization (Vasectomy).** This is a surgical operation performed on a man. A small portion of each sperm duct is cut. Afterward, the sperm, which are produced in the testicles, can no longer be transported to the seminal vesicles. Therefore, the ejaculate of a man who has been sterilized does not contain any sperm.
- **Female Sterilization (Tubal Ligation).** This is a surgical operation performed on a woman in which the fallopian tubes are tied and cut, thus blocking the egg from traveling to the uterus to meet sperm.

### **Q. Can a woman use the necklace as a family planning method?**

**A.** Yes. Women with regular menstrual cycles and supportive partners can use a special kind of necklace, called CycleBeads™, to help keep them from getting pregnant. However, in order to do this, additional screening and counseling is needed to ensure the method will meet their needs and is used correctly.

## **Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)**

### **Q. What are the names of common STIs?**

**A.** Syphilis, chancroid, gonorrhea, chlamydia, genital herpes, trichomoniasis, hepatitis B, human papilloma virus (HPV), and HIV.

**Q. What are the signs or symptoms of an STI in a man?**

**A.** Men may experience painful urination, urethral discharge, ulcers, or sores, depending on the STI. Adolescent boys should be counseled to seek treatment as soon as possible if they have any of these symptoms.

**Q. What are the signs or symptoms of an STI in a woman?**

**A.** Women may experience genital sores or ulcers, lower abdominal pain or tenderness, unusual vaginal discharge, vaginal itching, painful urination, or painful sexual intercourse, depending on the STI. Adolescent girls should be counseled to seek treatment as soon as possible if they have any of these symptoms.

**Q. Is it possible for a person to have an STI and not know it?**

**A.** Yes. STIs in women commonly go untreated because they are often asymptomatic, which means signs or symptoms are not experienced.

**Q. How can I protect myself against STIs?**

**A.** The only methods for protecting oneself against STIs are engaging in abstinence or using condoms. If you do contract an STI, it is important that you see a health provider in order to treat the infection with medicine.

**Q. Can someone get an STI from any kind of sexual activity?**

**A.** STIs are spread via sexual contact, which includes sexual intercourse and anal or oral contact.

**Q. Can there be serious long-term health problems when a person contracts an STI at a young age?**

**A.** Yes. Some STIs cause permanent infertility, chronic pain, and cancer of the cervix. Without treatment, heart and brain damage can develop 10 to 25 years after initial exposure to syphilis.

## HIV/AIDS

### **Q. What is HIV?**

**A.** HIV is the abbreviation for the human immunodeficiency virus. HIV is the virus that causes AIDS.

### **Q. What is AIDS?**

**A.** AIDS is the abbreviation for acquired immunodeficiency syndrome. AIDS refers to a group of illnesses due to infection by HIV and is the last stage of HIV infection. The virus weakens and finally causes a collapse of the body's ability to fight off illness.

### **Q. How do people become infected with HIV?**

**A.** There are three major ways of becoming infected with HIV:

- Through any type of unprotected sexual intercourse.
- Through the exchange of blood, primarily by sharing needles, but also by blood transfusions.
- From an HIV-infected woman to her baby during pregnancy or birth or through breastmilk.

### **Q. Can someone become infected with HIV from food, air, or water?**

**A.** No. There have been no known cases of HIV infection from toilet seats, clothing, dishes, sneezing, coughing, sharing food, biting, kissing, or simple contact with a person who is HIV-positive or has AIDS. One cannot get HIV from living with someone who is infected.

### **Q. Can anyone become infected with HIV?**

**A.** Anyone who has unprotected sexual intercourse or receives contaminated blood through transfusions, sharing needles, or other means, is at risk for HIV infection.

**Q. Is there a cure for AIDS?**

**A.** No. There are treatments for helping people with HIV infection to lead longer, healthier lives, but there is no cure and no vaccine to stop it from ever happening.

**Q. How do you know if someone has HIV ?**

**A.** There are tests that can tell if a person is infected with HIV. However, it is not possible to look at a person and know whether or not he or she is infected. A person can look healthy but actually be infected.

**Q. How can one protect oneself from getting an infection like HIV/AIDS?**

**A.** The best method for preventing HIV is abstaining from sex, or for a person who does not have HIV/AIDS to only have sex with another person who does not have HIV/AIDS. Because it is hard to tell who is infected without a test, a couple should always use a condom.

**Dual Protection****Q. Is it possible to prevent pregnancy and STIs at the same time?**

**A.** Yes. A couple can use the male or female condom to protect against *both* pregnancy and STIs, including HIV. A couple may also use two contraceptives (for example, a condom and an IUD) to protect against both pregnancy and STI/HIV transmission. Lastly, the surest form of protection from unintended pregnancy and infection can be achieved through abstinence, the avoidance of sexual intercourse altogether.

**Q. How does one get one's partner to use a condom?**

**A.** Sometimes people are reluctant to use condoms, because they think that condoms diminish the

experience of sexual intercourse. It is easier to promote condom use between two partners when they talk about using them *before* engaging in sexual intercourse. Talking about preventing an unintended pregnancy or STI *before* sexual intercourse helps partners understand the importance of using condoms.

### Specific Cultural Practices

#### **Q. What is male circumcision?**

**A.** This is a procedure usually performed on male babies soon after birth, although in some cultures it is performed later. This procedure removes all or part of the foreskin of the penis. The operation is not usually considered medically necessary but is done for religious or cultural reasons. Circumcised and non-circumcised penises perform and feel the same. There is increasing evidence that male circumcision lowers the risk of HIV transmission, though more research is needed to confirm this.

#### **Q. What is female genital cutting?**

**A.** In some African and Middle Eastern cultures, a girl may have her clitoris removed and/or labia removed or closed at birth, during childhood, or at puberty. This procedure is meant to prevent young girls from being promiscuous or sexually stimulated or becoming pregnant outside of marriage. This is illegal in many countries, because it can cause a great deal of emotional and physical pain for the woman at the time of the procedure and often for the rest of her life.

#### **Q. Are there some places where boys and girls get married at a younger age?**

**A.** Yes. In some societies, early marriage is an ongoing practice. Though most countries dictate the minimum age to be married is 18, there are some

countries that have minimum ages as low as 13. Often, such early marriages are arranged without the consent of the boys or girls involved.

### **Extra Activities**

The following are optional activities you may do with the group.

#### **Activity 1: Essay on How Our Society Talks about Fertility**

Invite the group to write an essay on the way their society shares information about fertility. Ask them to write about each of the following points:

- How do boys in our society usually learn about male and female fertility?
- How do girls in our society usually learn about male and female fertility?
- How are messages for boys and girls different?
- Do you think our society should change the way boys and girls learn about fertility, or do you think things should stay the same? Why?
- If you were teaching a course on fertility to people your age, what topics would you include?

#### **Activity 2: Fertility Awareness Crossword Puzzle**

Photocopy the Fertility Awareness Crossword Puzzle handout (page 94) and distribute it to each participant. Ask participants to either work on it at home or in pairs during the session.

### Activity 3: Use the Necklace to Track Fertility

Ask each menstruating girl to use the drawing of the fertility awareness necklace for a month. Non-menstruating girls can ask a female relative (older sister, aunt, mother, etc.) to use the drawing. Have all participants describe in a short one-page written plan how she is going to use or teach her female relative to use the drawing.

After the month is over, ask all participants to write a short essay on using the necklace drawing. The following questions should be answered in their essays:

- Were there any problems using the drawing of the necklace? If so, what?
- Was it easy to remember to mark the bead each day?
- What did you (or your female relative) learn about the body when using the necklace?
- How did it feel to use the drawing of the necklace?

#### Facilitator Note

For low-literate or younger participants, you can modify this activity—ask the participants to discuss these questions as a large group or in smaller groups.

### Activity 4: Consequences of Sexual Intercourse

Ask participants to make a list, with either words or pictures, of how they spend their time each day and how much time they spend doing those activities. It might be helpful to have them list all 24 hours in the day so that they do not forget about their free time in the mornings and evenings. After students are finished,

have them share their lists with the class. As they speak, list the activities on the flip chart or chalkboard. Sample activities may include: school; eating; sports; sleeping; extracurricular activities; reading; doing chores at home, the farm, or the family business; visiting with friends; singing; dancing; etc. Include in the discussion how the students feel about spending their free time outside of school doing their chores or other activities. Also discuss the responsibilities of doing chores, such as getting to work on time, being responsible for your tasks, etc.

Ask students what type of responsibilities they think are involved in being a parent. List some of the suggestions on the flip chart or chalkboard. You may prompt them to include any responsibilities they leave out or forget. Once again, you want to be sure to cover 24 hours of time so that they can understand the full effect of caring for a baby.

Have the participants compare and combine the two lists of responsibilities that they just made. When the comparison is made between the teens' and parents' responsibilities, have the students circle the activities that are required (feeding the baby, bathing the baby) and place an "X" by those that are optional (hanging out with friends, sports). Discuss the activities they could not do if they had a baby as a teenager.

Stress that pregnancy often results when young people have sexual intercourse, because they do not think of the consequences of this important event. Stress that young people might be physically ready to have sexual intercourse, but they usually are not emotionally ready. In addition, young people often are not prepared to use protection to guard themselves against pregnancy or STIs.

# Content for Session 3

## **What Happens during Sexual Intercourse?**

Sexual intercourse is when a man's penis moves in and out of a woman's vagina until he has an ejaculation of semen. The sperm from his semen swim into the uterus, then into the fallopian tube, searching for an egg to fertilize. During sexual intercourse several million sperm are ejaculated. Some will live up to six days inside the woman.

## **How Does Fertilization Occur?**

During the menstrual cycle, the egg is released from a woman's ovary. The egg floats down the fallopian tube toward the uterus. During the 24 hours that the egg is moving slowly through the fallopian tube, it has a chance of meeting sperm, if present. The egg is many times larger than each sperm. Only one sperm can penetrate or fertilize the egg. Once fertilized, an egg plants itself into the uterus lining. This takes about six days. Once safely planted, the fertilized egg begins to grow.

## **How Do You Know If You Are Pregnant?**

Soon after implantation of the egg, hormones are secreted in the body to prevent menstruation from occurring and to ensure the development of the fetus. These hormones can be detected in tests of the woman's blood and urine. Many women know they are pregnant because they do not menstruate or because they notice bodily changes like breast swelling or tenderness and weight gain. Not menstruating, however, is not a sure sign of pregnancy.

## **Purpose of the Necklace**

The fertility awareness necklace is used to help girls learn about and understand the menstrual cycle. The necklace has 32 beads. Each bead represents one day in a menstrual cycle. The *red bead* represents Day 1 of the menstrual cycle, the day on which bleeding begins.

The *six dark beads* represent the time of menstruation and a few days afterward. These days are infertile days, when a woman cannot get pregnant even if she has sex.

These days are then followed by *12 white or light beads*, which are the fertile days. These are the days when a woman can get pregnant if she has sex. You will notice that there are 12 white beads in this necklace even though a woman can really become pregnant for only five to six days each cycle. A woman is fertile for only 24 hours, but because sperm can stay alive inside a woman for up to six days, a woman can become pregnant for that many days. There are 12 beads because we do not know exactly which days these are. These 12 beads represent the approximate time of fertility.

These white or light beads are followed by *13 dark beads*, which are infertile days.

The necklace represents the menstrual cycle of most women. Each woman's cycle may be a little different, so the necklace does not represent the menstrual cycle of a specific woman. For example, a cycle may last 28 rather than 32 days. Both are normal. If a woman is using this necklace to keep track of her cycle, she should realize that her next cycle starts when she has her period, even if there are several dark beads left.

#### **Facilitator Note**

If a woman wants to use CycleBeads™ as part of her family planning method, it is important for her to have additional information. She should contact her family planning provider. The fertility awareness necklace or the drawing of the necklace is different from CycleBeads™ and is not intended for use in family planning.

# Menstrual Cycle Review Flash Cards

Day 1

Day 2

Day 3

Day 4

Day 5

Day 6

Session 3

Day 7

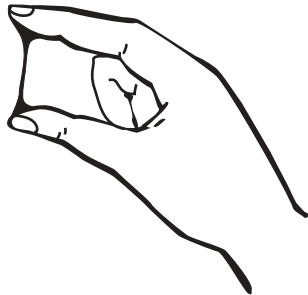
Day 8

Flash Cards Continued

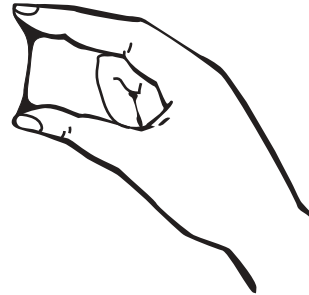
Day 9

Day 10

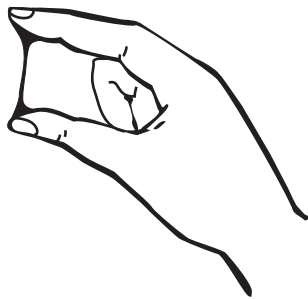
Day 11



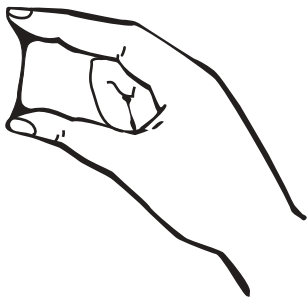
Day 12



Day 13

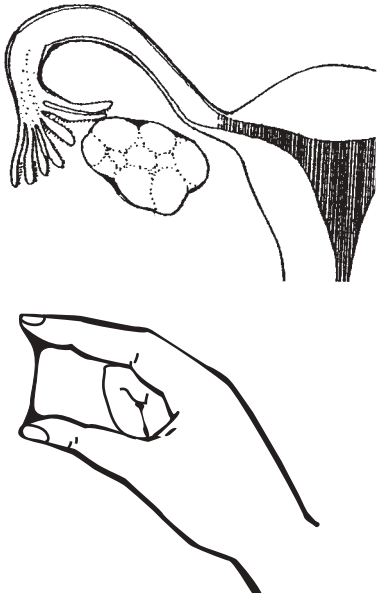


Day 14

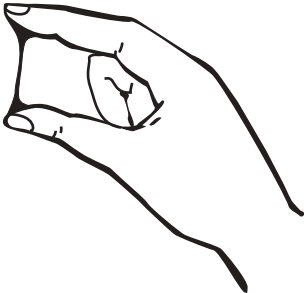


Session 3

Day 15

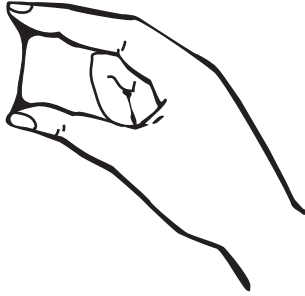


Day 16



Flash Cards Continued

Day 17



Day 18

Day 19

Day 20

Day 21

Day 22

Session 3

Day 23

Day 24

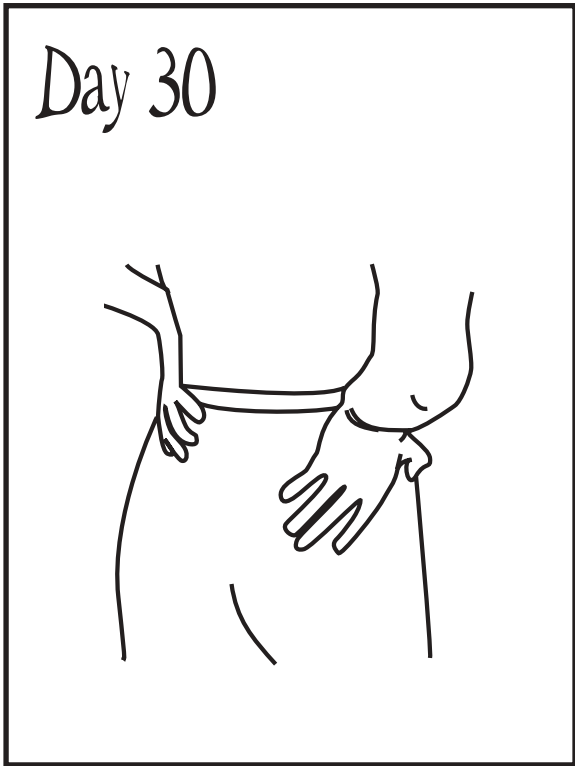
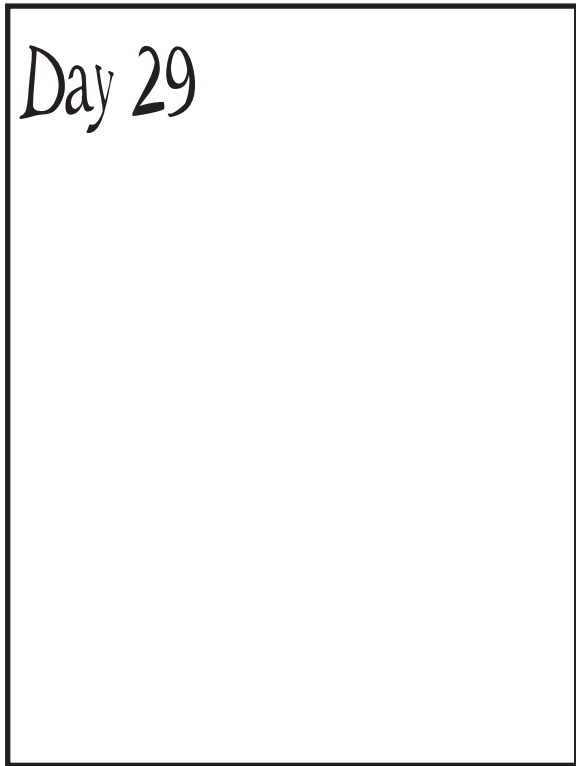
Flash Cards Continued

Day 25

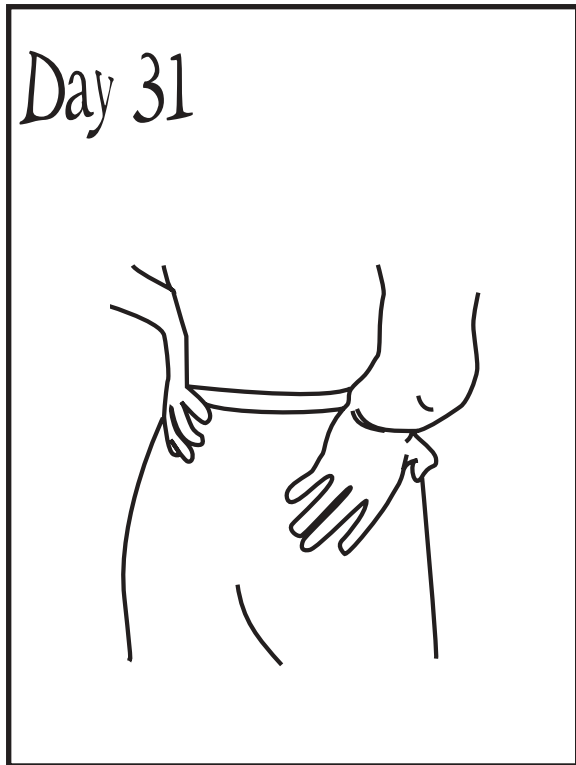
Day 26

Day 27

Day 28



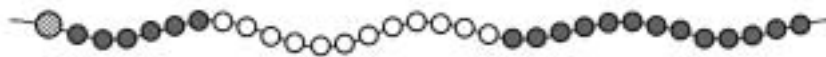
Session 3



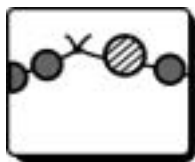
## Handout: How to Make the Fertility Awareness Necklace with Beads

### Step 1: *String the beads in the following order:*

- 1 red bead (for the first day of menstrual bleeding)\*
- 6 dark beads (for the early infertile days)
- 12 white or light beads (for the fertile days)
- 13 dark beads (for the later infertile days)

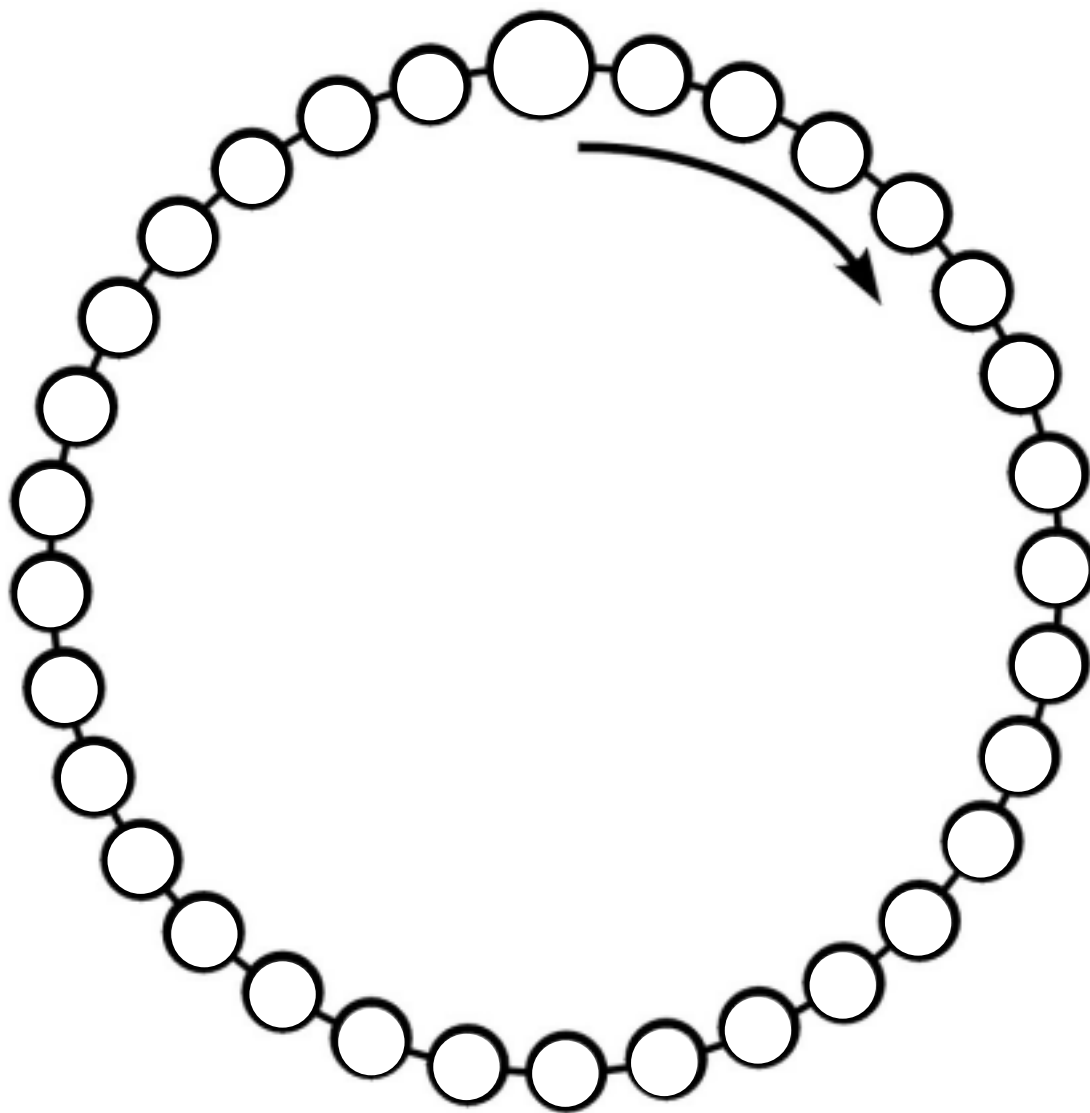


### Step 2: *Fasten or knot the necklace securely.*



\* Because the document type is in black and white, please note the red bead is represented by a striped bead throughout the manual.

## Handout: How to Draw a Paper Version of the Fertility Awareness Necklace



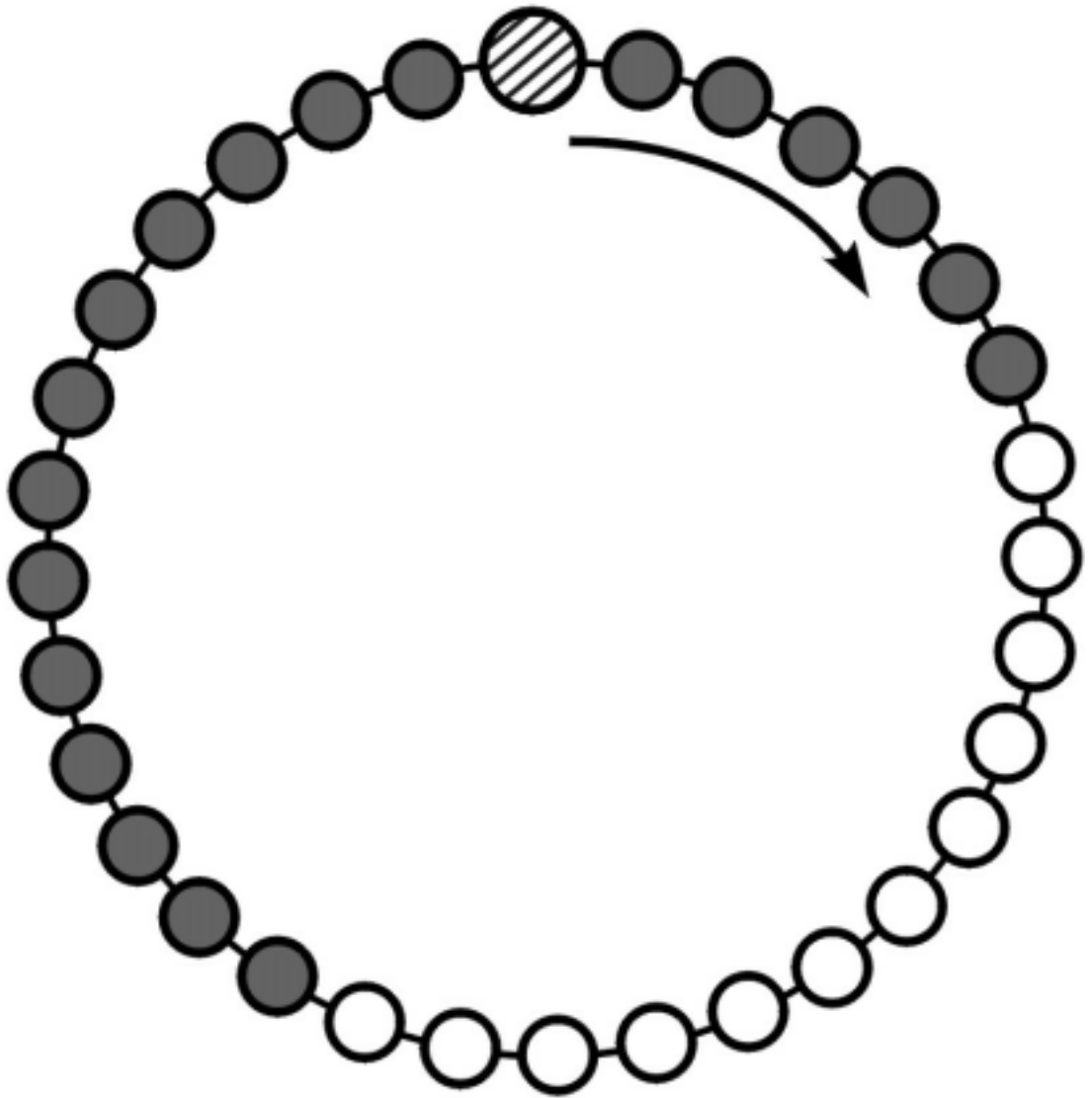
Session 3

**Step 1:** *Draw a necklace with 32 round beads, as shown above.*

**Step 2:** *Color the beads in the following order:*

- 1 red bead (for the first day of menstrual bleeding)
- 6 dark beads (for the early infertile days)
- 12 white or light beads (for the fertile days)
- 13 dark beads (for the later infertile days)

## Handout: How to Draw a Paper Version of the Fertility Awareness Necklace—Answer Key



## Handout: How to Use the Necklace as a Way to Track the Menstrual Cycle

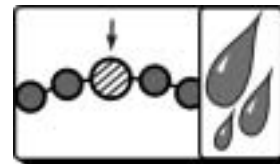
This necklace represents a woman's or girl's menstrual cycle. Each bead is a day of the cycle. The necklace has beads of different colors.



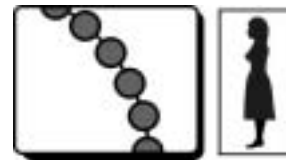
## Session 3

A woman or girl can make the necklace to know when to expect her period; help her keep track of her menstrual cycle; and understand the changes occurring in her body during her cycle.

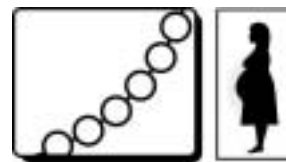
The marked red bead represents the first day of a woman's or girl's period.



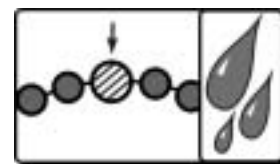
Dark beads represent infertile days. These are days when a woman is very unlikely to get pregnant.



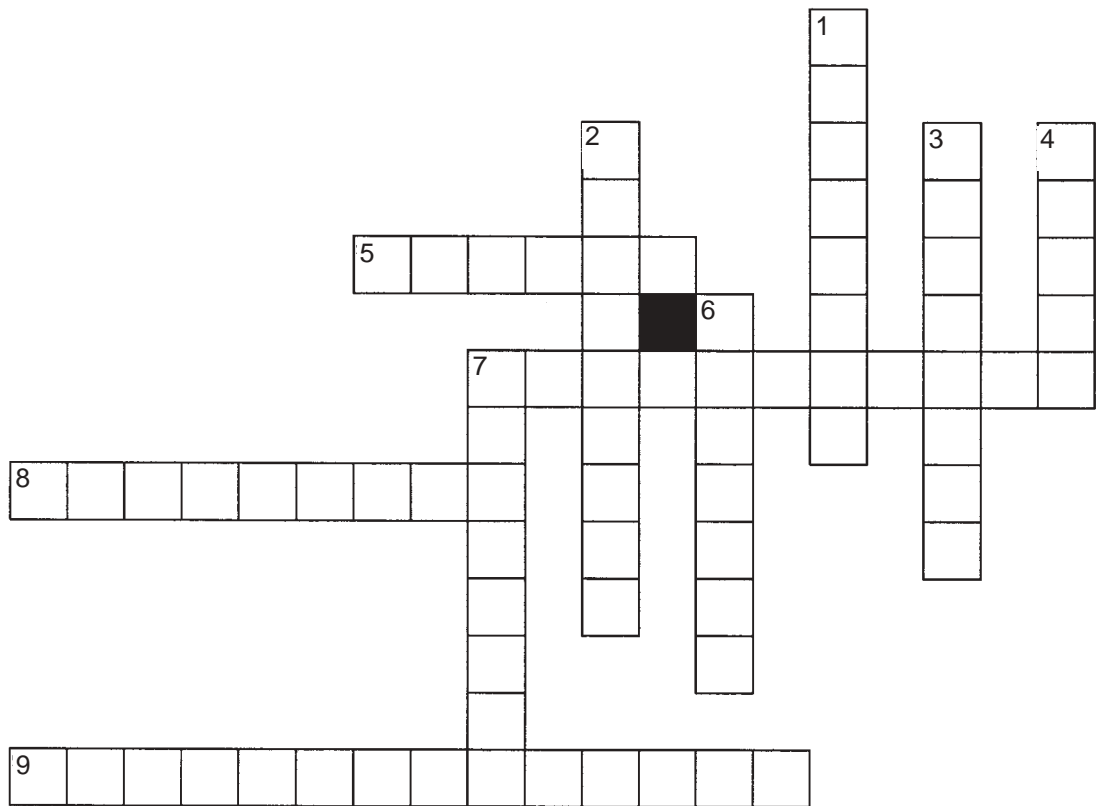
White or light beads represent fertile days. These are days when a woman can get pregnant.



On the day her period starts again, a new menstrual cycle has begun.



## Handout: Fertility Awareness Crossword Puzzle



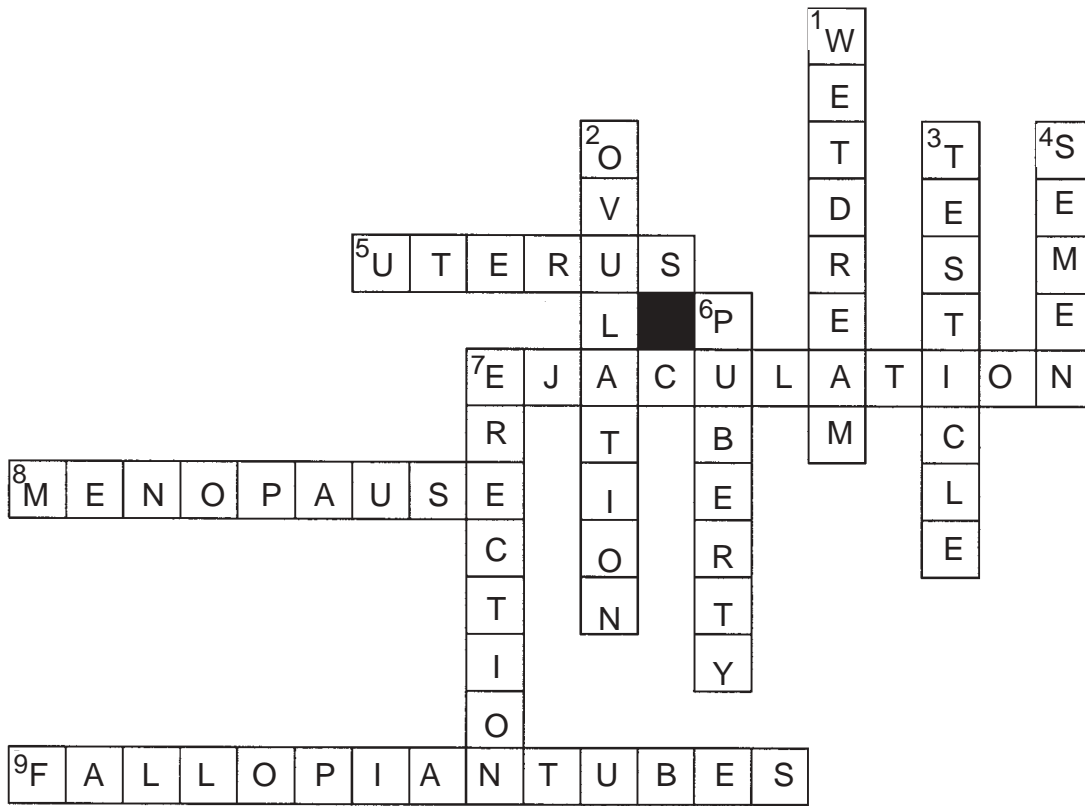
### Across

5. The place where a baby develops
7. Forceful release of semen from the penis
8. Time in life when a woman's menstruation ends
9. The part of the woman that takes the egg from the ovaries to the uterus (two words)

### Down

1. Passing of semen during sleep (two words)
2. Release of an egg from an ovary
3. Place where sperm is produced
4. A thick fluid that is discharged from the penis during ejaculation
6. Process of becoming an adult
7. Hardening of the penis

# Handout: Fertility Awareness Crossword Puzzle—Answer Key



Session 3