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The Magic of New Beginnings

- ◆ Spot the early signs of labour
- ◆ Track your baby's every move - the first 12 months

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SIGNS OF OVULATION

Planning on having a baby? Learning about the signs of ovulation can make a huge difference when you want to conceive. ■ WORDS **STEPHANIE CLARISSA**

Every woman is different and the time of ovulation varies from woman to woman. There is also a possibility that some women will not even experience ovulation symptoms but with some practice, it is possible to identify and track your symptoms. As ovulation is tied to pregnancy, this can help you plan for your next baby – just pay attention to the signs that may indicate you are ovulating.

Dr Christopher Ng at **GynaeMD Women's & Rejuvenation Clinic** lets us in on the signs of ovulation and how it can make a difference when you want to conceive.

Spot the Signs

One way to tell if you're ovulating is to keep track of your cervical mucus. Just before ovulation occurs, your cervical mucus becomes more fluid and thinner (think the consistency of a raw egg white). If you can stretch it out between your fingers, that's your fertile mucus, which helps with sperm survival.

Also, around the time ovulation occurs, the cervix becomes softer and opens slightly. There may be some brown spotting or discharge. There may also be accompanying breast tenderness, bloating and mild pelvic pain. Libido can be increased along with it.

Test it

Besides the ovulation symptoms mentioned, you can test your urine using ovulation kits. For the majority of women, this means testing around day 12 to 16 of their menstrual cycle to see if and when it is positive. **Dr Ng** advises testing their urine after 11am. Testing your basal body temperature is also another way to track your ovulation as it is rather constant for most women prior to ovulation. There is usually a 0.2 Celsius increase after ovulation. This increase in temperature is the sign that ovulation has just occurred.

Your gynaecologist will also be very helpful at this time by performing a timed blood hormone test (progesterone) approximately seven days before your next menstruation.

A Month or More

Not all women may ovulate every month. This explains why some women

may take longer to conceive than others. The ovulation days can vary between women and can even vary month to month for the same woman.

Trying to Conceive

In order to conceive, ovulation is only one part of the equation. There are important factors contributing to fertility. The timing of intercourse during the fertile period is wise to consider. Having normal patent tubes and normal sperm are also equally important.

It can be challenging to learn how to track your ovulation from the start. Paying more attention to your signs can help you recognise them more efficiently. In the long run, many women will be able to gauge where they are specifically in their cycle. Having a better understanding of your ovulation timing will let you become more in tune and aware of your body signs and symptoms. It will also help

you gain and seek confidence to be a rather active participant of what is happening each month.

Take the time now to start tracking your ovulation right, in order to plan to conceive right. ■

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