

Women's Health Overview

Female Reproduction, Conception, Menstrual Cycles, Puberty Through Menopause, Hygiene & The Value of Woman in God's Kingdom

Knowledge Attitude Practice	<i>After working through this lesson, participants will be able to:</i> 1. Describe how a woman's reproductive organs work. 2. Explain how conception occurs. 3. Explain a woman's menstrual cycle. 4. Discuss how the sex of a baby is determined. 5. Identify the three stages of womanhood: puberty, childbearing, and menopause. 6. Examine ways a woman can better cope with the symptoms of menopause.
Overview	For <i>How God Designed Women</i>: It is important to learn in advance how much sex education your participants have and adapt this information to their level. It is not meant to be embarrassing but to learn about how amazingly God made our bodies. Participants may need help in preparing to talk about this topic. In the Stages of Womanhood, the focus is on female development, the different stages in a woman's life, and what to expect with each stage. This lesson is long, and it may be helpful to divide it into 2 separate lessons.
Materials	<i>Collect these items before beginning the lesson:</i> • Poster-size paper, markers, and masking tape • Role plays: <i>Where Do Babies Come From?</i> & <i>I think I Might Be Dying!</i>; <i>What is Wrong with You, Mother?</i> • Handouts or Drawings: <i>Female Reproductive System</i> (color or black and white versions); <i>Conception</i>; <i>Conception of Males and Females</i>; <i>How Gender Happens</i>; <i>Changes in Puberty</i>, <i>Three Stages of Womanhood Body Shape</i>, <i>Changes in Menopause</i>, <i>Diagram of Three Stages of Womanhood Timeline</i> • Knitted uterus, doll and placenta model (if available) • • Bible or verses from Psalm 139, .

LESSON

120 minutes

INTRO:

We want to take you on a journey of a woman - discussing how a woman's body is designed and the stages a woman goes through in her life. We want to challenge you to think about health from a holistic perspective - thinking about your health physically but also spiritually - and taking what you have learned to share with others. As you sit through this lesson, I encourage you to think about who you will share this information with...who needs to hear this? Daughters, sisters, mothers, friends, other women in your community? What needs and issues do you see in your own communities among women? How can this information be helpful to them? You have a beautiful voice and we want to encourage you to use it to share what you have learned to help your community!

God designed the body of a woman beautifully with many different complexities. Think about the things your body can do...can you name some of those things?

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1. Life is created and formed in her body
2. A woman's body carries a baby for 9 months. Her body has everything needed to help that baby to grow.
3. A woman's body enables her to deliver life into this world.
4. A woman's body enables her to feed and nurture that child through breastfeeding. Her body has the nutrients needed to feed that child.
5. A woman also nurtures and cares for her family. She cooks for them and feeds them. She works around the house, etc.
6. A woman's body is amazing - so much strength and so many things that she can do!

STARTER: *Where Do Babies Come From?* or *I Think I Might Be Dying!* (5 min)
Use the attached role play.

Ask SHOWD Questions:

What did you **See**?

What was **Happening**?

Does this happen in **Our** place?

Why does this happen?

What will we **Do** about it?

I. **Three Stages of Womanhood** (1 min)

Throughout this lesson, we will discuss the three stages of a woman's life (Puberty, Childbearing, Menopause). Using the attached diagram of "Three Stages of Womanhood Timeline," as a guide, draw a horizontal line on a piece of paper to represent a woman's life with birth at one end and death at the other.

II. **Stage 1: Puberty** (10 min)

A. **What is Puberty?**

Puberty is the stage in a girl's life when her body changes from that of a child to that of a woman. It is also the time when she is physically able to become pregnant.

Ask participants to put PUBERTY where they think it belongs on the "Three Stages of Womanhood Timeline" that you have drawn.

B. **What changes happen to a little girl as her body changes to that of a woman?**

*As a group, list the changes that happen to a little girl as her body changes to that of a woman? (May use handouts: *Body Shape Changes in Puberty*, and *Changes in Puberty*) Report back.*

1. **Breasts** - enlargement; separation of nipple from areola
2. **Body Hair** - pubic; hair under arms
3. **Body Size/Height** - growth spurt; girls get more fat on the body
4. **Menstruation begins** - about 1 year after breasts begin to develop, menstruation begins
5. **Body odor & Acne** - hormone changes cause both body odor and acne; keeping the body clean and dry help decrease both
6. **Emotional Changes** - sexual desire begins; moody (tearful, anger, drama)

C. **At what age do girls in this community generally go through puberty?**

Average age is 13 years, but it may be as early as 10 or as late as 15 years.

D. What might affect the timing of puberty for a particular girl or community?

Timing of puberty can be affected by a few factors:

1. Our inherited health
2. Overall nutrition and health. Better nourished girls tend to go through puberty at earlier ages.
3. Amount of work or exercise. Excessive amounts of work or exercise can delay puberty.

III. Stage 2: Childbearing Years (5 min)

A. What words do you think best describe the next portion of a woman's life?

1. The next portion is often described as the "childbearing years." These years begin when a woman is fully developed and able to bear children.
2. For most women, their childbearing years begin at about 16 years of age, although culture often indicates the age at which women generally begin childbearing.

Ask participants to put CHILDBEARING YEARS where they think it belongs on the "Three Stages of Womanhood Timeline" that you have drawn.

IV. Reproductive Organs: (10 min)

Show a large drawing of the female reproductive system. Ask the large group to identify each organ and what it does. Have participants label the organs on the drawing.

- A. Ovaries:** Two organs where the eggs develop
An egg is released each month into one of the fallopian tubes.
- B. Fallopian Tubes:** Two tubes that connect the ovaries to the uterus
Where the egg and sperm unite at conception.
- C. Uterus:** The womb, a powerful muscle
1. Where the baby grows
 2. Where menstrual flow comes from each month if there is no pregnancy
- D. Cervix:** The opening at the bottom of the uterus
1. Allows sperm in for conception
 2. Allows menstrual blood out if woman is not pregnant
 3. Opens in labor for birth of a baby
- E. Vagina:** Extends from the cervix to the outside of the body.
1. Passageway through which menstrual blood passes
 2. Receives the male organ during sex
 3. Serves as the birth canal

V. Conception & Pregnancy (10 min)

Have a large group discussion regarding conception. Show drawing of female reproductive system and/or drawings of conception.

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A. What is conception?

Conception is when the sperm and egg meet. One sperm enters the egg which is called **fertilization**. This is the beginning of a pregnancy. Once the sperm and egg unite, no other sperm can enter due to chemical changes in the outer layer of the egg.

B. How does conception occur?

When sperm is released from the man during sexual intercourse, the sperm travels through the cervix and uterus and out to the fallopian tubes to meet the egg.

- **When are sperm available for conception?**

1. Men produce sperm continuously, with approximately 200-500 million per ejaculation.
2. Sperm can live up to 5 days within the woman's body but if there is no egg in the fallopian tube, the sperm will die.

- **When is the egg available for conception?**

1. Most women ovulate once a month, approximately 14 days after the start of the menstrual period (when the woman starts bleeding), but ovulation can be difficult to predict as it depends on the length of the woman's cycle, which can vary from month to month.
2. Usually only one egg is available at a time.
3. The egg lives for 24-48 hours.
4. It is possible for a woman to become pregnant up to 48 hours after ovulation.

C. When during a woman's fertility cycle does conception occur?

1. Conception occurs in the first 24 to 48 hours after the egg is released. If the egg is not fertilized by a sperm during this time, it dies.

D. How is the sex of a baby determined?

Draw simple illustration of egg with "X" and two sperm, one with "X" and one with "Y" or use drawings, "Conception of Males and Females" and "How Gender Happens."

1. All eggs (from the mother) have only an "X" chromosome. Sperm have either an "X" or "Y" chromosome. Combination of X+X=girl. Combination of X+Y=boy.
2. The father's chromosome determines the sex of the baby.

E. Is there anything that can be done to guarantee one sex or another?

There is no way to guarantee having either a boy or a girl, and we must examine our cultural pressures that emphasize one or the other. A society works best when there are about the same number of males and females

****Use Fertility Awareness Lesson to teach on the menstrual cycle using the bead activity.***

I. Woman's Monthly Cycle Bead Activity (30 min)

Explain: We are going to talk about a woman's monthly cycle as a circle. Every month the woman's body goes through the same circle or cycle. A woman's body produces hormones that cause her to be able to become pregnant. A woman cannot become pregnant every day of the month, but only near the time of ovulation (when a woman's body releases an egg from her ovary). Her body is best suited to start a pregnancy during this time.

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A. Monthly Cycle Beads:

1. Draw a strand of beads (or use the *Monthly Cycle Beads* diagram) with 3 red at the top (indicates first day of period), then 4 black beads (representing infertile days), then 12 white (representing fertile days), then 13 black beads. The strand represents a woman's monthly cycle.
2. Next to the first red bead, write Day #1 representing the start day of bleeding—beginning of menstrual cycle.
3. The first day of menstruation (period) is the first day of a woman's monthly cycle.
4. At the 11th-16th beads, (white color), mark these days as the highest fertility. Ovulation (releasing an egg) typically occurs during this time of the cycle.
5. Mark the days a woman is likely to become pregnant. Because it is difficult to know precisely when a woman ovulates (releases an egg), and because sperm can live up to 5 days, there is a range of days during which there is a possibility that the woman is fertile and could conceive. Remember that the egg can live up to 48 hours.
6. If a woman **wants** to become pregnant, she should have sexual intercourse during the days surrounding expected ovulation.
7. If she does **NOT** want to become pregnant, she should NOT have sexual intercourse during these days, or she should use another form of birth control during these days.

B. Use beads: Beads can be used to demonstrate the monthly cycle. **We can use beads to help us determine where we are in the cycle, and if we are in the days that we are likely or unlikely to become pregnant if we have intercourse. This is one type of Natural Family Planning.**

Start by giving each woman a string approximately 18 inches long.

1. **How long is the monthly cycle from the start of bleeding to the next start of monthly bleeding?**

Average monthly cycle is 28 days but ranges from 23-35 days. We measure the monthly cycle from the beginning of one period to the beginning of the next.

(For the facilitator: This number of days or beads works for most women and addresses the variation in cycles which can occur between women and sometimes between cycles. When a woman starts her next period, she skips the remaining beads and moves to the starting red bead, thus making up the difference in cycle lengths.)

2. **We will use 32 beads for our cycle string.**

3. **Approximately how many days is the monthly bleeding?**

Average length of monthly bleeding is 4-5 days, but it can be shorter or longer.

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4. **To represent start of bleeding, string 3 red and 4 black beads on the string. We always consider the first day of the bleeding as the first day of the menstrual cycle.**
 5. **When is it unlikely for a woman to become pregnant?**
A woman is unlikely to become pregnant during first seven days of her cycle.
 6. **When is a woman likely to become pregnant?**
A woman is most likely to become pregnant during the middle of her cycle, the time when her body usually releases an egg (ovulation).
 7. **Next string 12 white beads. These beads represent the days before and after ovulation.**
 8. **Is it more likely or less likely for a woman to become pregnant on these days of her cycle?**
More likely, because the egg is more likely to be released around this time.
 9. **Is there another time when a woman is unlikely to become pregnant?**
A woman is unlikely to become pregnant near the end of her menstrual cycle.
These beads represent the days of the cycle far enough after ovulation that the woman is unlikely to become pregnant if she has sexual intercourse during this time.
 10. **Follow the white beads with 13 black beads.**
 11. **Have each participant tie the end of the string securely, leaving a little space for the beads to slide.**
- C. **In order to use the bead string for family planning give the following instructions:**
1. Have the woman mark each day in her cycle beginning with the first day of her menstrual bleeding (*can use a marker clip, rubber band or hang bead string on a nail.*)
 2. Each day, mark a new bead (move from red to red to red, then continue moving in the same direction)
 3. **To avoid pregnancy, DO NOT** have sexual intercourse on the white bead days. **To try to become pregnant DO** have sexual intercourse on the white days.
 4. Continue marking each day with a new bead until the first day of the next period. On the first day of the new cycle mark the first red bead and start the cycle again.
- D. **Always restart the cycle on the first day of bleeding, even if there are more black beads left.**
- E. **What does this tell us about a woman's monthly cycle?**
There are predictable times of fertility and infertility during the month.
- F. **How can a woman use this information to prevent or encourage pregnancy?**
1. The woman and her husband can plan sexual intercourse for fertile days of month to plan a pregnancy.

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2. The couple can avoid sexual intercourse on the fertile days to lower their chance of pregnancy though there are other much more effective methods to prevent pregnancy.

G. Are there other ways that a woman can predict her fertility or infertility? What are some of the traditional ways of knowing or predicting fertility?

1. Vaginal mucus. Very slippery vaginal mucous indicates fertility (*use egg whites to demonstrate*). Thick/sticky vaginal secretions indicate non-fertile days (*use corn starch mixed with small amount water to demonstrate*). This method isn't reliable in preventing pregnancy.
2. Using a calendar to chart her cycle and to count out days, avoiding sexual intercourse on days 8-19 of the menstrual cycle to avoid pregnancy.
3. Charting basal body temperature. There is a tiny rise in body temperature starting on the day of ovulation. A thermometer is needed for this method.
4. Other traditional methods

H. If a woman and her husband want to have sexual intercourse during the days she is fertile, what can be done to avoid pregnancy?

Condoms can be used to avoid pregnancy during fertile days of the month or during the time that a woman is breastfeeding or is not having regular monthly periods (for example: beginning of menopause.)

IMPORTANT: The BEAD method is **not** predictive of fertility for a mother who is breastfeeding until she starts her normal monthly bleeding again after delivery. It also is **not** predictive if a woman has irregular menses. This method is only effective for women with regular menstrual cycle lengths of 26-32 days. **There are other much more effective methods of preventing pregnancy.**

VI. Signs of probable pregnancy (10 min)

In a large group discuss. Make a list of the signs.

A. What are the signs that a woman is probably pregnant?

1. A woman's monthly bleeding stops - This is often the first sign of pregnancy.
2. Nausea and sometimes vomiting - usually starts three or four weeks after conception and improves around 3 months of pregnancy.
3. Tired and sleepy. This normally ends at 3-4 months of pregnancy.
4. Breast tenderness - starts 3-4 weeks after conception.
5. Frequent urination (pass urine) – most common in the first 3 and last 3 months of pregnancy.
6. Belly (abdomen) gets bigger as baby grows.
7. Breasts get larger as they prepare to make milk for the baby.
8. Develops a dark line on her belly, darker nipples and sometimes dark patches on her face and belly. Will fade after delivery.
9. Feels light, fluttering baby movements (starting at 4-5 months).

B. Sometimes a woman's period stops and she's not pregnant, what might be some of the causes of that?

1. Malnutrition
2. Excessive exercise or physical work

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3. Using some types of birth control
4. Breastfeeding
5. Starting menopause (change of life)

VII. **Stage 3: Menopause**

Ask participants to put MENOPAUSE where they think it belongs on the "Three Stages of Womanhood Timeline" that you have drawn.

A. There is one more stage in a woman's life. How would we describe these later years in relation to childbearing?

1. These are the post-childbearing years.
2. The time where the body is changing is called perimenopause.
3. The time afterward, when the ovaries no longer release eggs and when menstruation no longer occurs, is called post-menopause.
4. Fertility decreases, then ends.
5. Birth control is still important until the woman has been without menstruation for at least 1 year.

B. At what age do women generally stop menstruating and bearing children?

For many women menopause takes place at around 50 years of age, but it can vary from 45-55.

C. What are some of the signs and symptoms of menopause?

List signs and symptoms on newsprint:

1. Periods change, may be lighter, heavier, longer, shorter, irregular.
2. May skip periods.
3. Mood changes, irritability
4. Bloating, breast discomfort
5. Weight gain
6. Hot flashes
7. Sleep problems, tiredness
8. Anxiety, irregular heartbeat
9. Difficulty with memory, concentration
10. Frequent urination, urinary leaking
11. Vaginal dryness, decreased sex drive

Women's Hygiene

It is important that we understand the stages our bodies go through as women and how they work. It's also important that we take care of our bodies to keep them healthy and avoid sickness.

STARTER: Handwashing Activity (15 min)

Use the attached starter.

Ask SHOWD Questions:

*What did you **See**?*

*What was **H**appening?*

*Does this happen in **O**ur place?*

***Why** does this happen?*

*What will we **Do** about it?*

I. Germ and the Importance of Handwashing (10 min)

Discuss as a large group.

A. What are germs and why are they bad?

1. Germs are in our environment.
2. They are so small that we can't see them, like the chalk (or glitter) used in the demonstration.
3. Some germs can make us sick if they get into our bodies.

B. Why is this lesson important for women?

1. Women do much caring for people and family so they can easily spread germs if they do not wash their hands.
2. Women have special areas of their bodies that can be infected with germs and cause sickness if they do not use proper hygiene practices.

C. What are some ways that germs on dirty hands can get into people, making them sick?

1. Germs spread from unclean hands to food, objects, and then to others making them ill.
2. Sick person can spread germs when cooking for others.
3. Person has diarrhea, doesn't wash adequately and touches others, food, objects.
4. Touching ill person and then own mouth, eyes, etc.
5. Washing with contaminated water then touching food or eating.
6. Blowing nose then cooking or touching food or objects.

D. When should we wash our hands? (see handouts)

1. It is important to wash our hands with clean water frequently. Boil and cool water if necessary.
2. Before cooking, after handling raw foods.
3. Before eating.
4. Before and after touching open sores on people.
5. After going to the bathroom.
6. After touching/scratching private area or handling menstruation cloths.
7. After blowing nose, cough, sneeze.
8. Before and after caring for someone who is ill.
9. Before breastfeeding.
10. Before and after diapering the baby.
11. Before and after assisting a woman give birth.
12. After gardening or caring for animals.
13. After shaking many hands.

II. Special Women's Hygiene Needs (20 min)

Divide into small groups and report back to large group.

A. Why is daily washing with soap and water important?

1. Helps prevent buildup of germs and illness.

B. What parts of a woman's body should be bathed daily and why?

1. Teeth – build-up of germs causes gums to bleed; germs then can enter open areas and lead to infection. Use toothpaste if available, water and brush or clean cloth if toothbrush is unavailable.

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2. Genital areas – daily washing helps prevent germs from entering urethra (where urine comes out), vagina (birth canal), and rectum (where stool comes out) and causing infections.
3. Under arms – prevents germs from causing skin breakdown and odor.
4. Feet – germs from soil may enter broken skin and cause infection.
5. Face -- germs can easily enter our lips, nose and eyes.

C. What are some hygienic practices women can do in the genital area to prevent infection and disease?

1. **Urinary Tract Infection** - *when bacteria gets into the urethra, it can cause infections. Symptoms can include a strong urge to urinate that doesn't go away or a burning feeling while urinating, urine may look cloudy, red, bright pink or cola-colored, may have a strong odor, and pain in the pelvis also can be a symptom. Sometimes, UTIs cause no symptoms.*
2. **To help avoid Urinary Tract Infections....**
 - a. Wash genital area with mild soap and water daily.
 - b. Wipe or dry genitals from front of body towards back after passing urine or stool, to prevent germs from the stool and rectum from getting into the urethra and causing a bladder infection.
 - c. Urinate soon after sex, especially if the woman has had previous bladder infections.
 - d. Drink plenty of liquids for good health and to avoid bladder infections.
3. **Vagina**
 - a. When menstruating, be sure to change to clean cloths or pads several times a day.
 - b. If using tampons, they should be changed at least every 8 hours. ****Don't leave them in more than 8 hours or you can get a serious infection.**** Don't put anything in the vagina unless given to you by a trained health worker.
 - c. If using a vaginal menstrual cup, empty and clean at least every 8 hours.
 - d. A small amount of vaginal discharge or wetness is normal. This is how the vagina cleans itself. It will change through the menstrual period. Bad smelling discharge or pain with discharge is NOT normal.

D. What are some signs of a vaginal infection?

1. Bad smelling or frothy discharge
2. Vaginal itching or burning
3. Discharge that is white and lumpy like milk curd or yogurt
4. Green or gray discharge
5. Discharge that smells like fish or baked yeast bread

Note: It is best to see a trained health worker for any of these signs of vaginal infections.

III. Yeast Infections (10 min) *Discuss in large group.*

A. What is a yeast infection?

1. A yeast infection is caused by a different type of germ (called a fungus). This germ is already normally in your body, but certain situations can cause the number of these germs to increase and cause an infection.
2. Yeast infections are common and not dangerous. But they can be very uncomfortable.
3. Yeast can cause diaper rashes and thrush in babies.

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4. It can also cause a vaginal infection in women that is very itchy. The discharge can be white or yellowish, sometimes in thick clumps like milk curd or yogurt. The skin in the genital area may be very red and irritated.

B. What causes a yeast infection?

Yeast grows well in warm, moist environments, and they feed off sugar. Infections are more likely to occur with:

1. Pregnancy
2. Diabetes
3. Eating lots of sugar
4. Very warm weather
5. Wearing tight fitting clothing that doesn't allow air circulation
6. Taking antibiotics for an infection. This kills the good bacteria in the vagina which allows yeast to grow.
7. Not cleaning properly after passing stool (such as wiping from back to front) which can push germs into the vagina.

C. How do you prevent yeast infections?

1. Wear cotton underwear and loose, airy clothing.
2. Eat yogurt to help encourage your body's good bacteria (germs) to grow. The good bacteria can help prevent the bad bacteria from growing.
3. A vaginal yeast cream may get rid of the yeast infection
4. Be sure to wash underwear in hot water, with a small amount of vinegar if possible, which kills yeast.
5. If they are not bothersome, yeast infections do not always need treatment.
6. Clean the genital area daily, wiping from front of body toward the back after using the toilet.
7. Douching (washing the vagina out with water or any other liquid) is not healthy because it can wash out the good bacteria in the vagina, does not cure infection, and does not prevent pregnancy. It is best NOT to douche.
8. Putting substances into the vagina that have not been recommended by a trained health worker may cause infection. It is best NOT to put substances into the vagina unless given by a trained health worker.

IV. Spiritual Applications (20 min)

Divide the women up into groups of 4. Have them read the following verses in their groups and report to the whole group the answers to the following questions:

Group 1: (Women's Hygiene) Read Hebrews 10:22; 1 John 1:7-9; Psalm 51:10; Isaiah 1:16

"...let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water." - Hebrews 10:22

"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." - 1 John 1:7-9

"Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me." - Psalm 51:10

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*"Wash and make yourselves clean. Take your evil deeds out of my sight; stop doing wrong."
-Isaiah 1:16*

A. What do these verses have to do with the topic of women's hygiene? How can we apply the things we have learned to our lives spiritually?

1. Just as germs can get into our bodies and make us ill, when we let sin into our lives, this can make us spiritually ill.
2. Jesus is the one who cleanses us from sin and prevents our souls and relationships with God, others, and ourselves from being sick and unhealthy.

Group 2: (Stages of a Woman) Read Titus 2:3-5 & Colossians 3:16.

"Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. Then they can urge the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God." -Titus 2:3-5

"Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts." -Colossians 3:16)

A. What do these verses have to do with the stages of a woman? How can we apply the things we have learned to our lives spiritually?

1. Be spiritual mothers to younger women
2. Teach and admonish each other in all stages of life
3. Encourage one another

Group 3: Read Psalm 139:13-16 & Ephesians 2:10

"For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be." -Psalm 139:13-16

"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." - Ephesians 2:10

A. What do these verses tell us about God?

1. Even as long ago as the time of David, the Psalms tell us of God's creative power.
2. We are so precious to our great God that He creates each and every one of us.

B. What do the verses tell us about ourselves?

1. Only in recent times have we been able to know how we are created inside our mother's body.
2. In this Psalm, it speaks of God knitting each person together in their mother's womb.
3. All the days of our lives have been planned by God.
4. We are God's workmanship and created to do good work.

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C. What do these verses have to do with women?

We are created beautifully, wonderfully, and complex by God - both physically and spiritually.

Group 4: Genesis 1:26-27

"Then God said, 'Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.' So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them." Genesis 1:26-27

A. What do these verses tell us about God?

1. God created men and women
2. God created men and women with purpose to rule over creation

B. What do the verses tell us about ourselves?

1. Men and women are created equally - by God
2. Men and women are His image bearers
3. Men and women have characteristics in common with God

C. What do these verses have to do with women?

1. In God's Kingdom, women have value and purpose. They are created in His image
2. She is a co-laborer in God's Kingdom and called to work alongside men.

VIII. Conclusions and Take-Away (Optional) (5 min)

A. What did I discover in this teaching today?

B. Who can I share with what I learned? Who needs to hear this?

C. What will I do with what I discovered in this lesson?

1. When?
2. What do I expect to happen?
3. How will I know if it happened?

D. Pray

References: Bible References (NIV)

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/getting-pregnant/expert-answers/pregnancy/faq-2005850>

Option 1: How God Designed Women

STARTER: Role play: ***Where Do Babies Come From?***

An adolescent daughter is asking her mother many questions about how babies arrive.

The mother doesn't want to tell her and acts embarrassed. The young girl continues to ask her mother questions.

Finally, the mother in desperation, tells her daughter that the way you get babies is at night when you're asleep, an angel leaves the baby under your bed.

Option 2: The Stages of Womanhood

STARTER: Role play: ***I Think I Might Be Dying!***

Young girl talking to her friend:

1st: I'm so scared! I think I might be dying!

2nd: What!!! Why do you think that?

1st: I can't tell you. I don't know. I just started bleeding one day! At first it was a little bit, but now it's more. It happened last month, too!

2nd: Oh, no! What do you think we should do? Maybe you should tell your mother. Maybe you need to go to the doctor.

1st: I'm too afraid! What if she thinks I am bad? I can't tell my mother! I'm so afraid (starts crying).

Option 3: The Stages of Womanhood - Menopause

Role play: **What is Wrong with You, Mother?**

This role play is for use in section IV of Three Stages of Womanhood, Puberty Through Menopause, if it is taught separately.

Mother and her adult daughter are outside preparing food. They are both working hard - the daughter is peeling the vegetables and the mother is scraping coconut.

Mother: Why do I always seem to get the hard work? I am an old woman; you should be doing more of the work now! I'm hot (as she tries to fan herself with her hand), I'm tired and all of these people coming for dinner are mostly your friends not mine. They were supposed to come tomorrow, not today!

Daughter: What is wrong with you, mother? You are always so cranky, so grumpy lately. You're up in the middle of the night, and you don't want to get up in the morning. You forgot my friends were coming today. You used to love it when my friends came."

Mother sneezes loudly and has a frustrated look on her face, looks down at her leg and sees she has just lost urine. "I'm done with this coconut, you finish it! I am going to the toilet."

Option 4: *I Wish I Had Your Problem!* - Fertility Awareness

Two women friends talking

1st: We have wanted to have a baby, but I haven't gotten pregnant in the last 4 years. I want to please my husband and I, too, have been longing for a child.

2nd: I wish I had your problem; I have a child every year. I don't feel I can take care of another baby now. I wish I could know how to avoid another pregnancy. I have so much work to do, and I need to help my husband with the animals and farm. My husband says that it costs too much to go to the hospital or to buy medicine for birth control. I don't know what to do!

STARTER: Handwashing Activity

This is a practical exercise in proper handwashing technique.

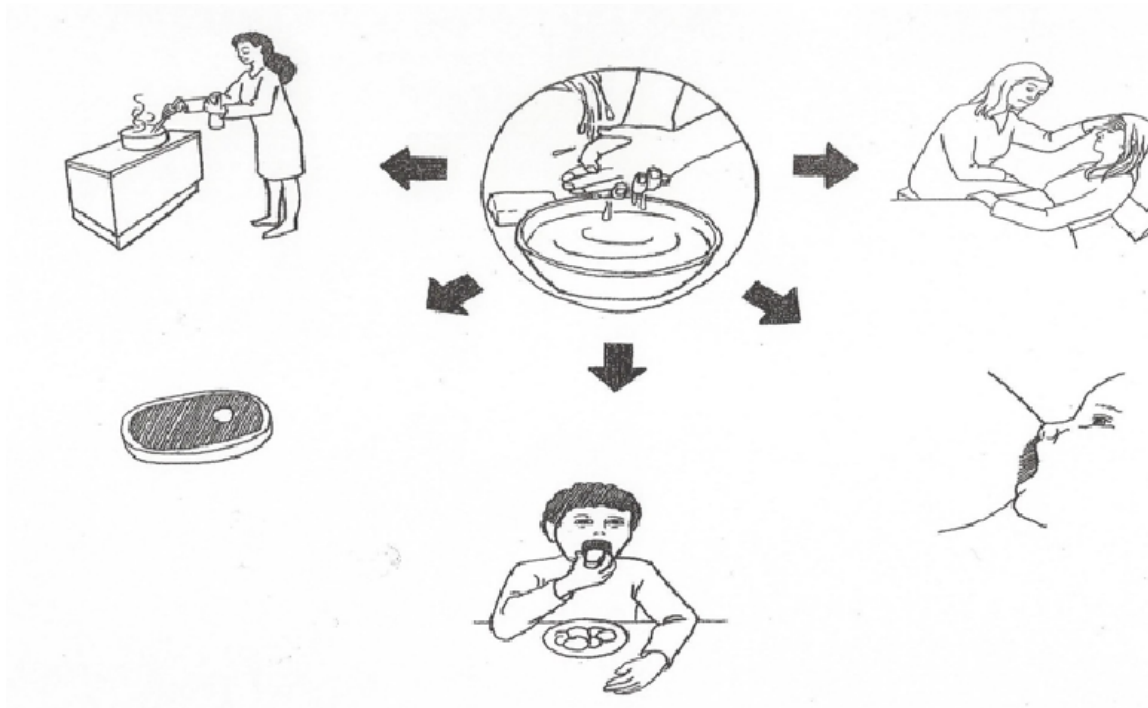
- A. Have all participants rub both hands, front and back, with colored chalk or glitter mixed with a little oil.
- B. Divide participants into four groups. Have each group clean their hands with the following methods:
 - Group 1: wiping hands on a dry cloth
 - Group 2: wash with plain water
 - Group 3: wash briefly (less than 20 seconds) with soap and water
 - Group 4: wash vigorously with soap, water, and a small nail brush. Bring large group back together and compare the washing methods. Ask the following questions:
 - 1. Which method got the hands the cleanest?**
 - 2. Which method did the least amount of good?**
 - 3. Was washing with water good enough?**
 - 4. What about drying your hands in the air?**
 - 5. What would happen if you dried your hands on a dirty towel?**
- C. Have all participants wash hands with soap, water, and brush.



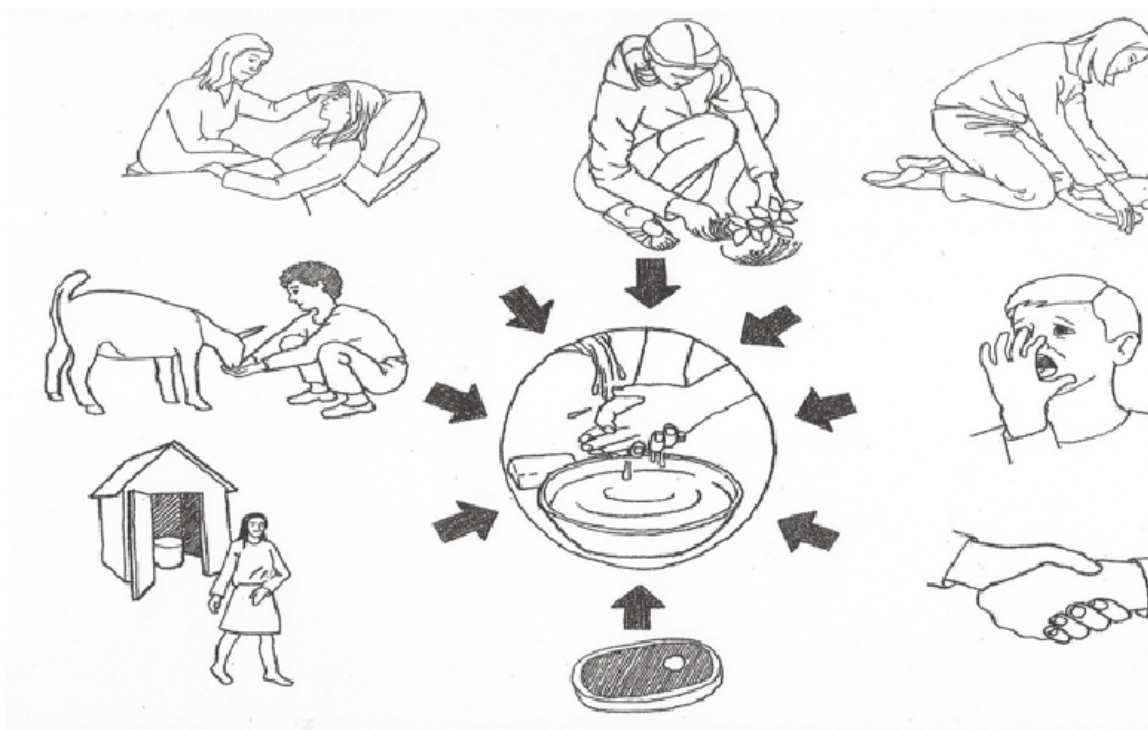
LET'S WASH OUR HANDS

Women's Health Overview

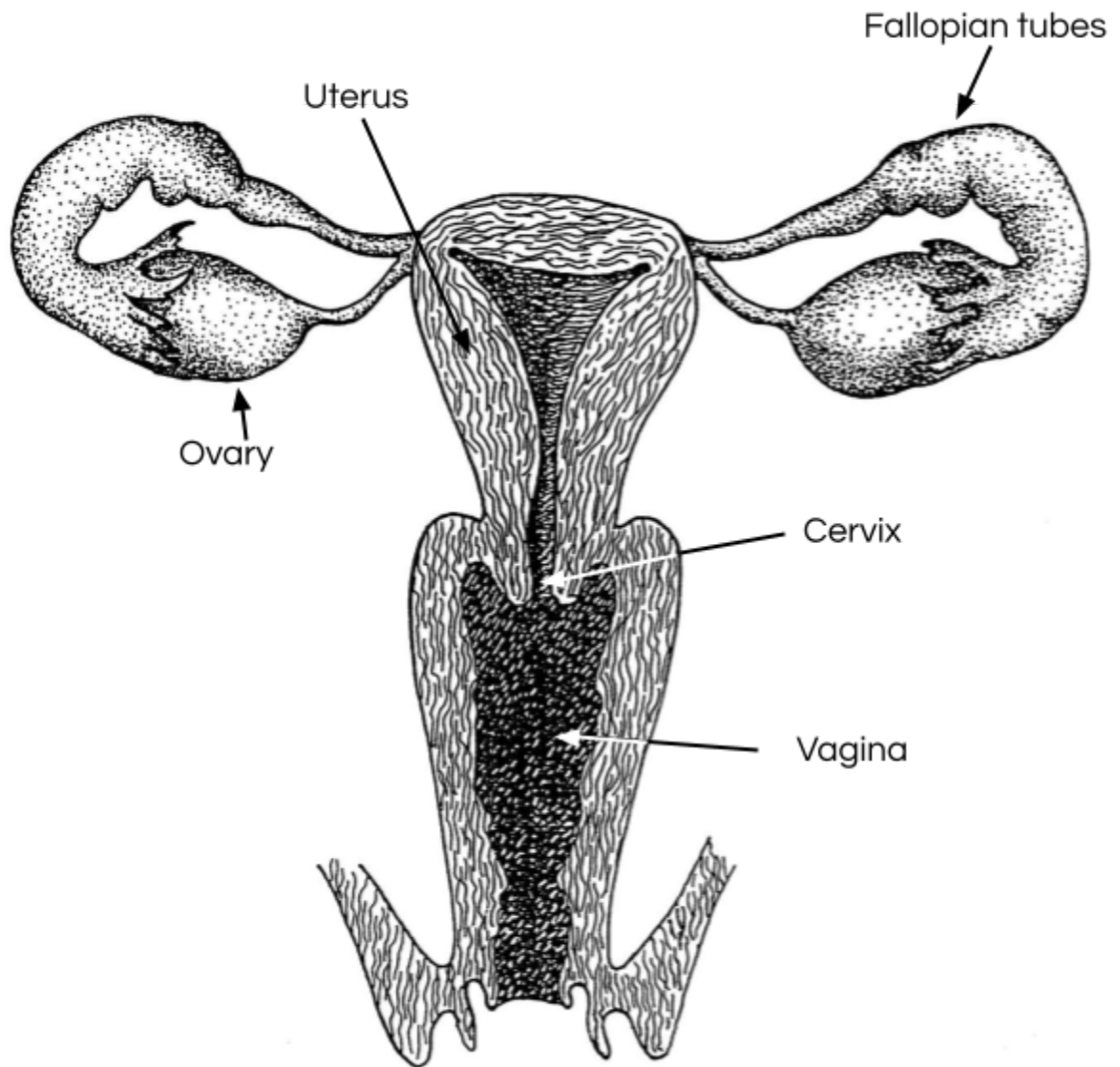
WASH HANDS BEFORE



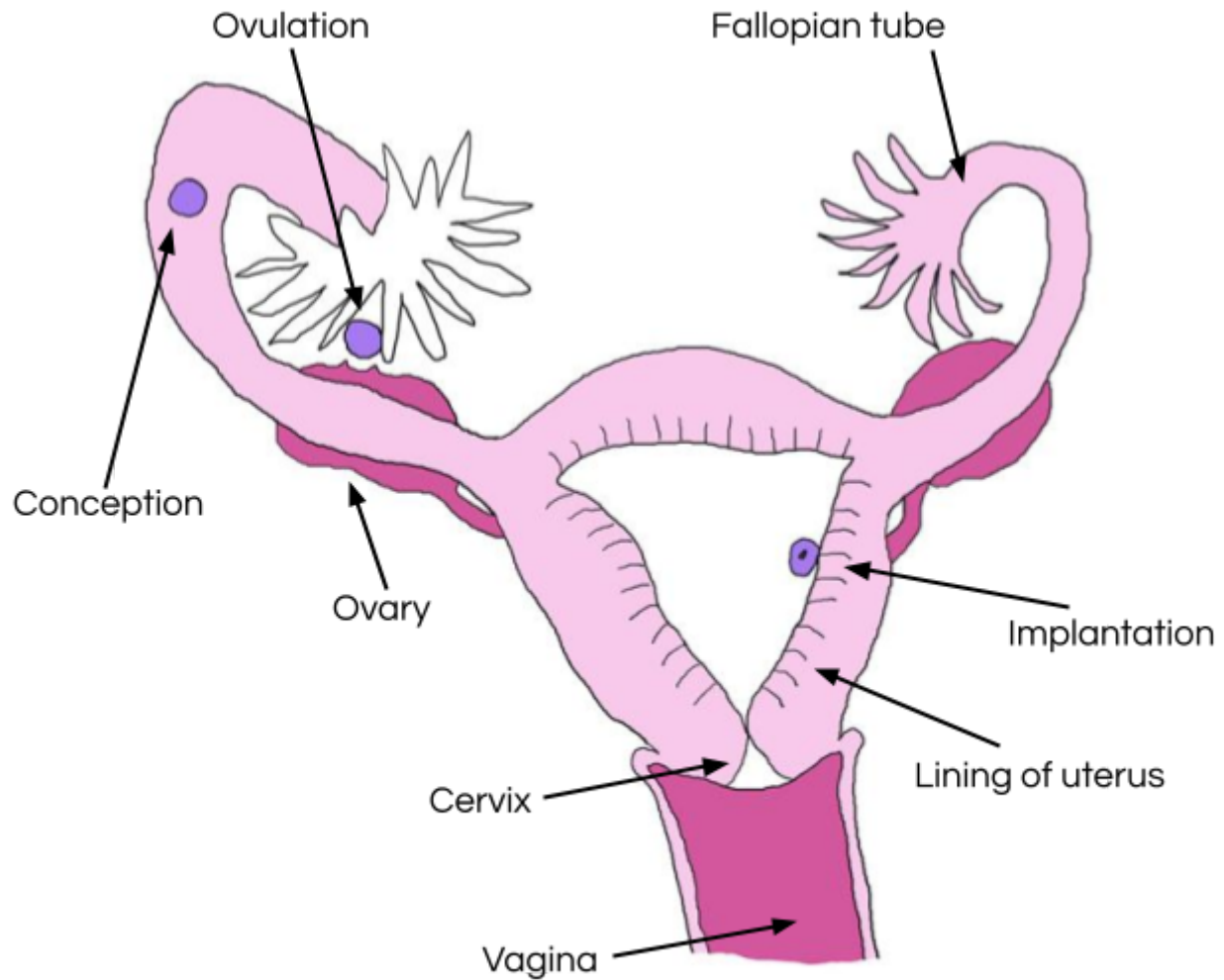
WASH HANDS AFTER



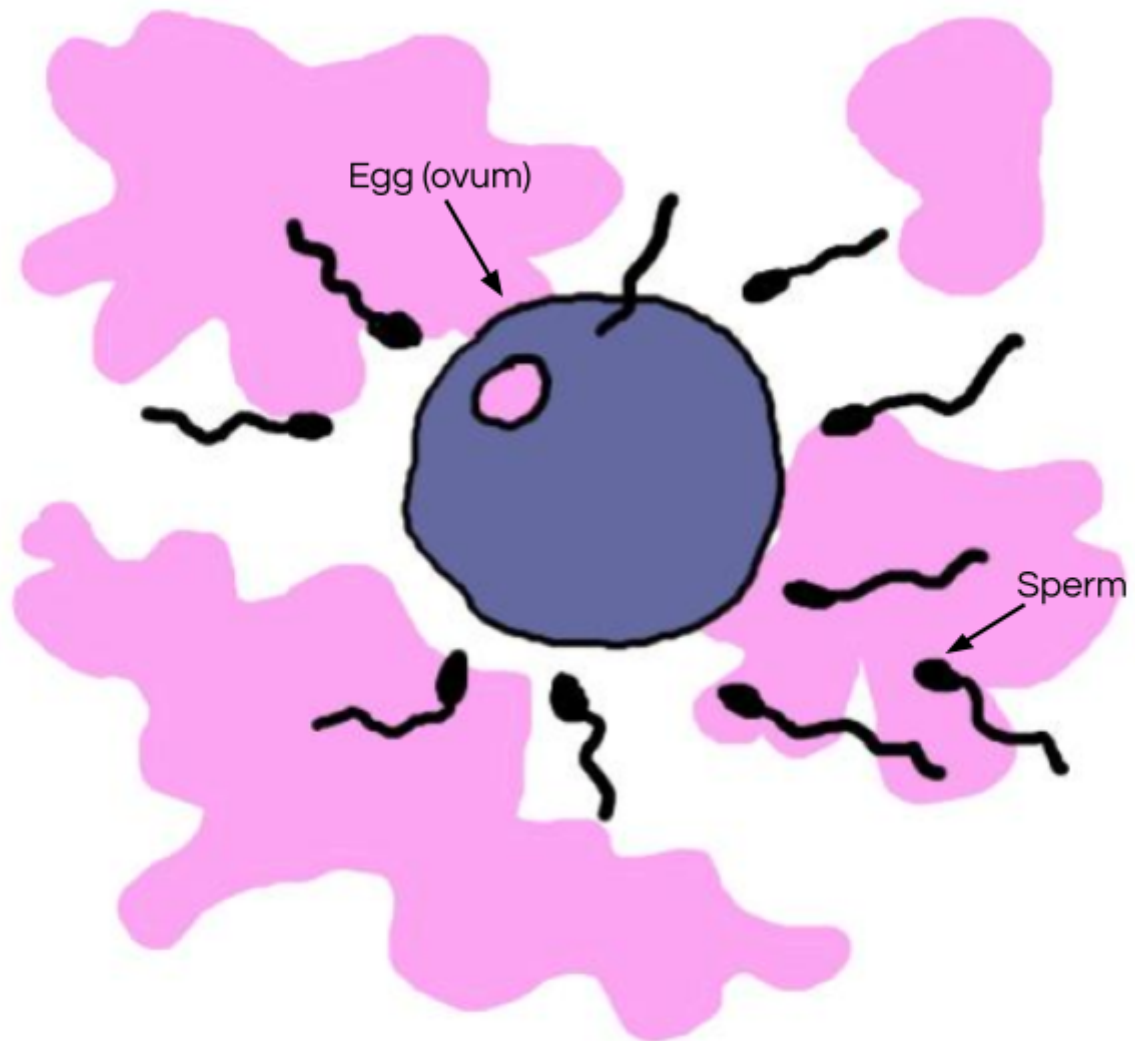
HANDOUT: Female Reproductive System



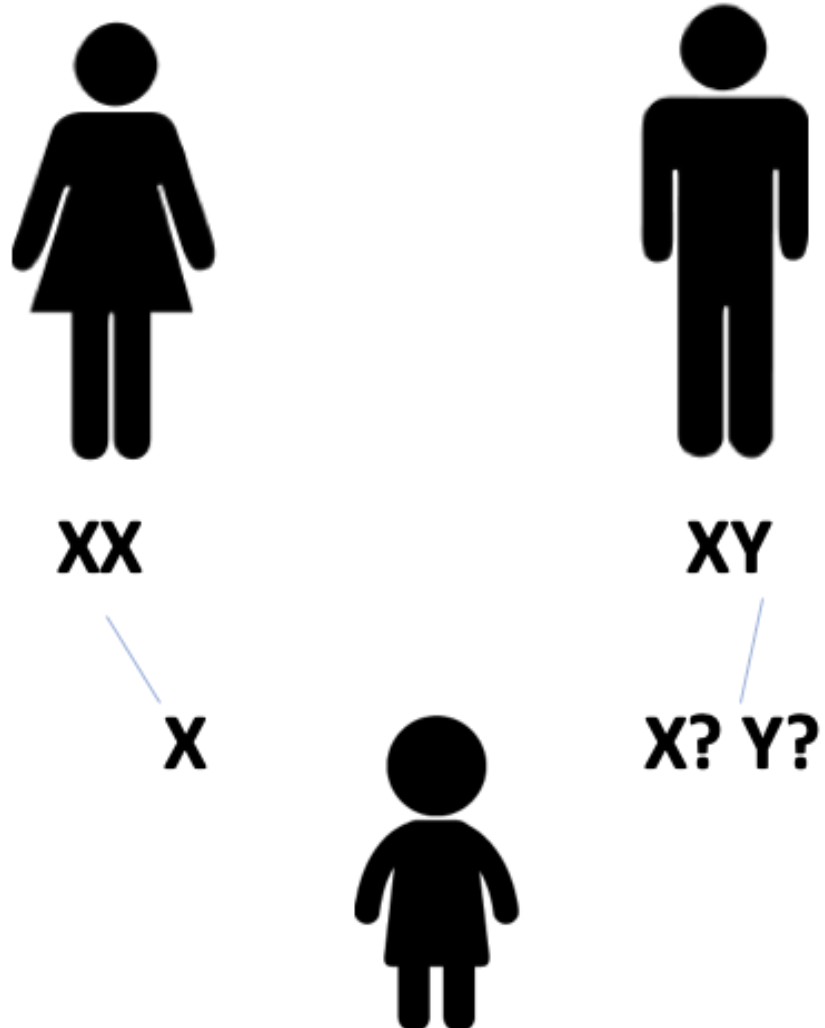
HANDOUT: Female Reproductive System



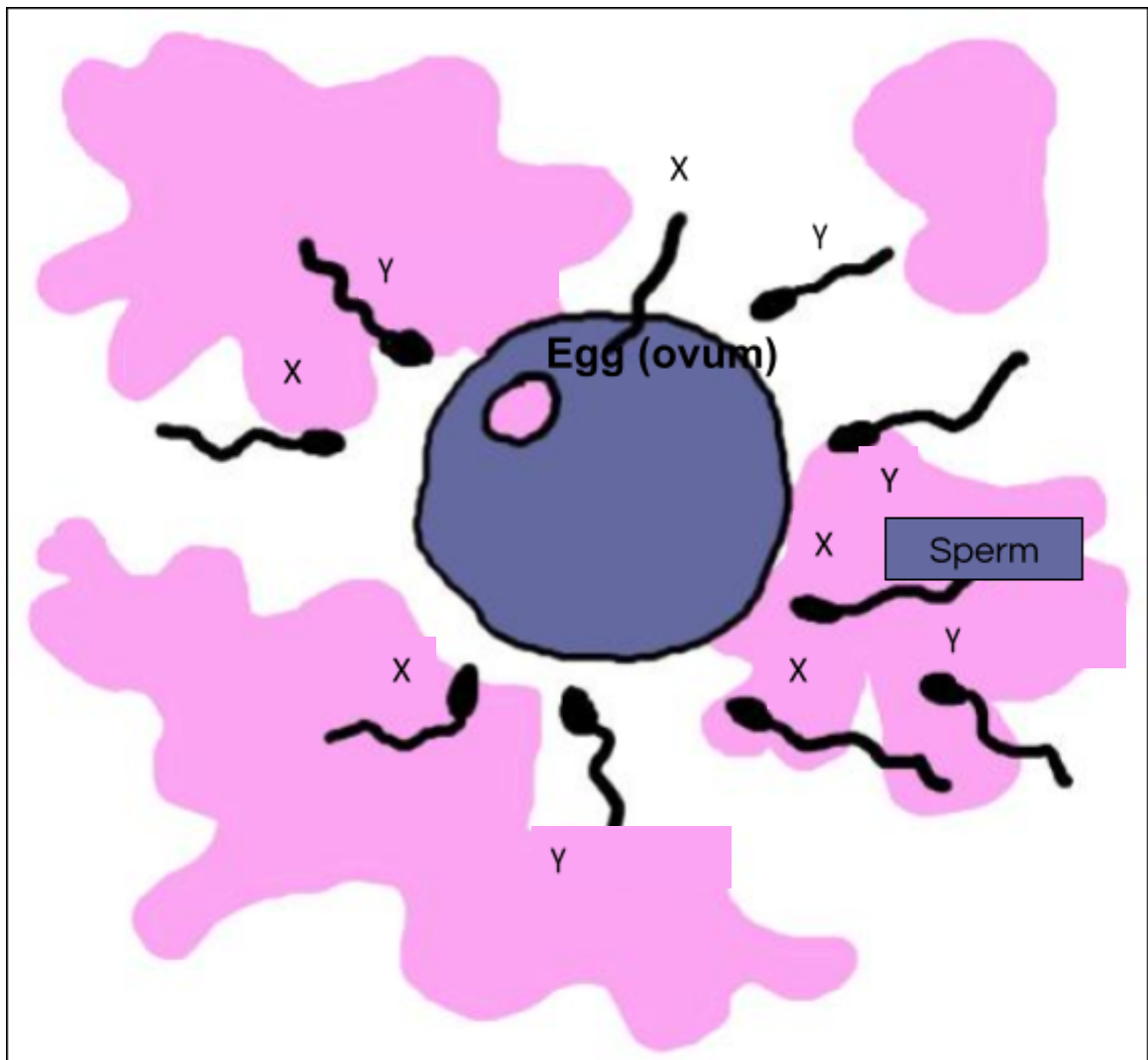
HANDOUT: Conception



HANDOUT: Conception of Males & Females



HANDOUT: How Gender Happens



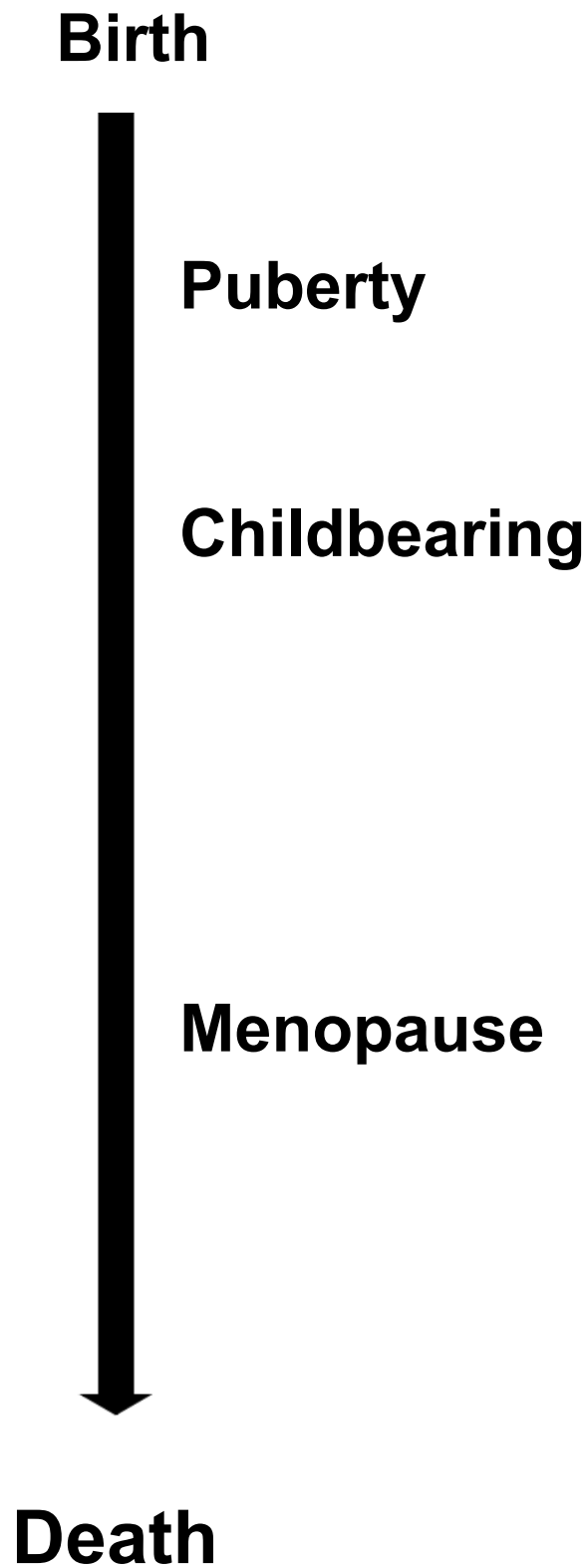
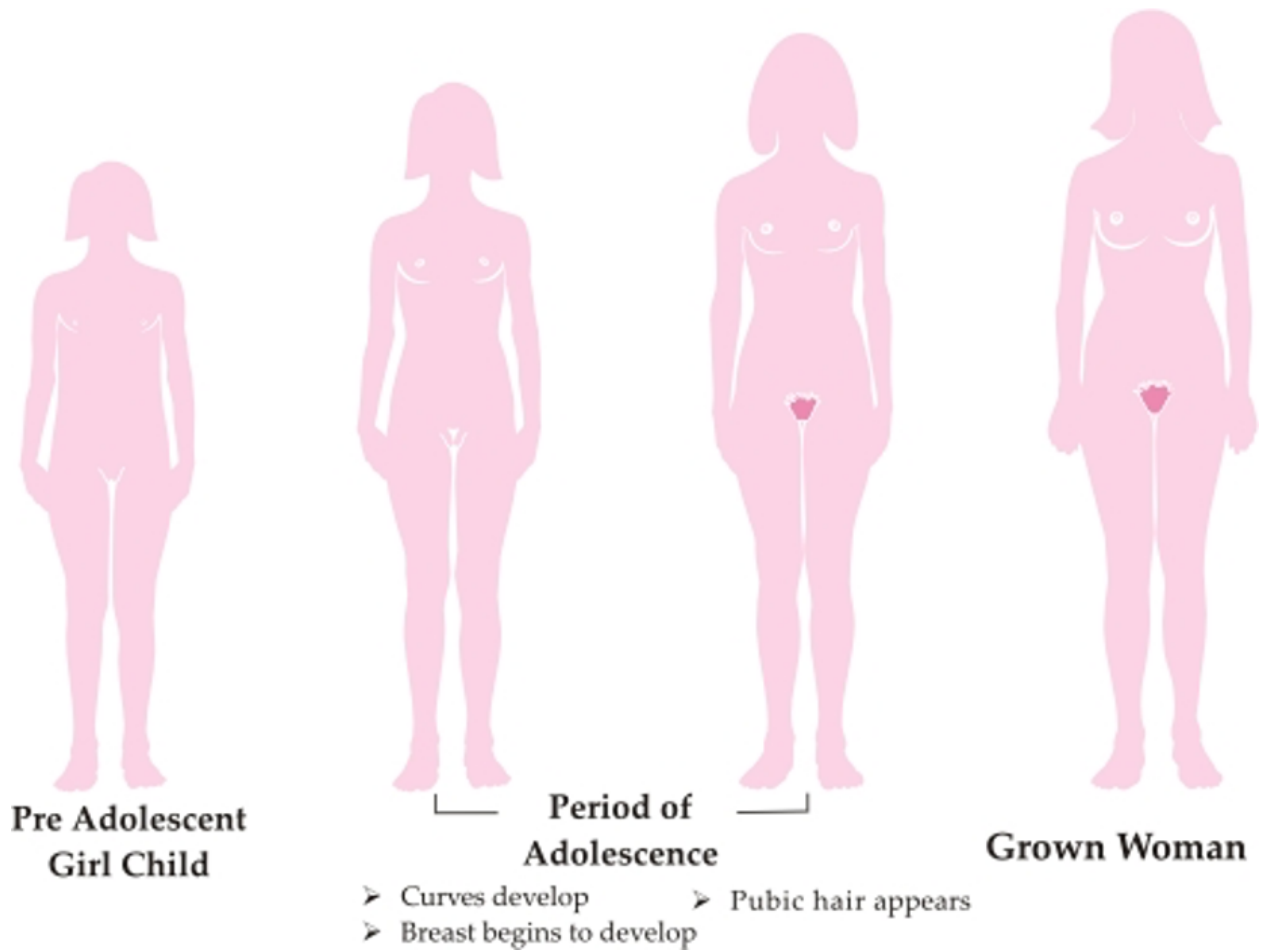
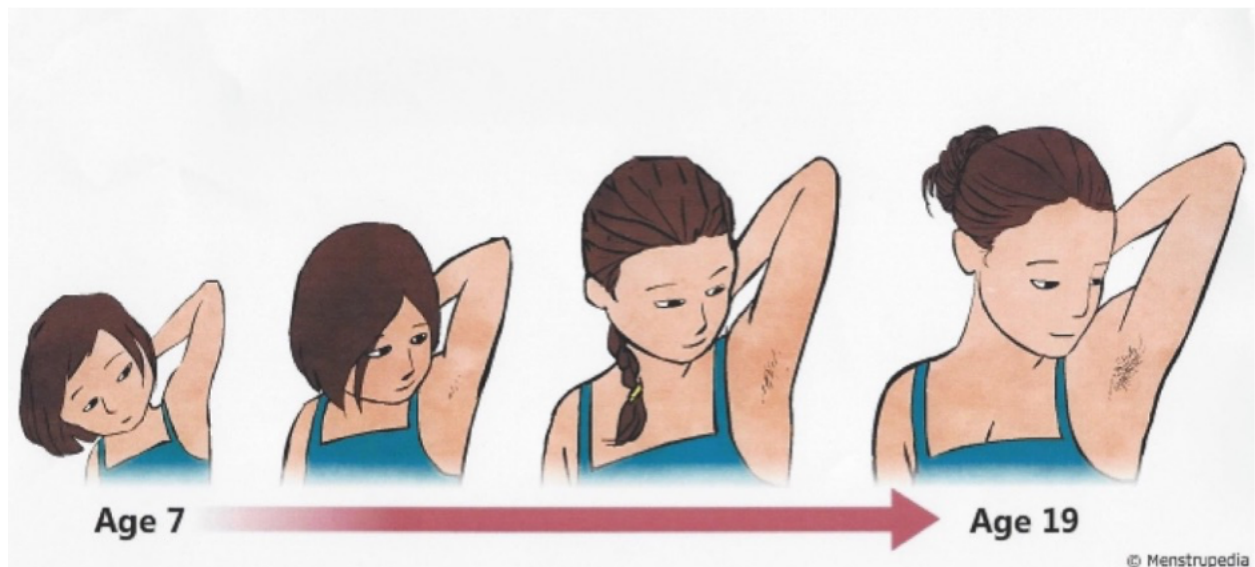
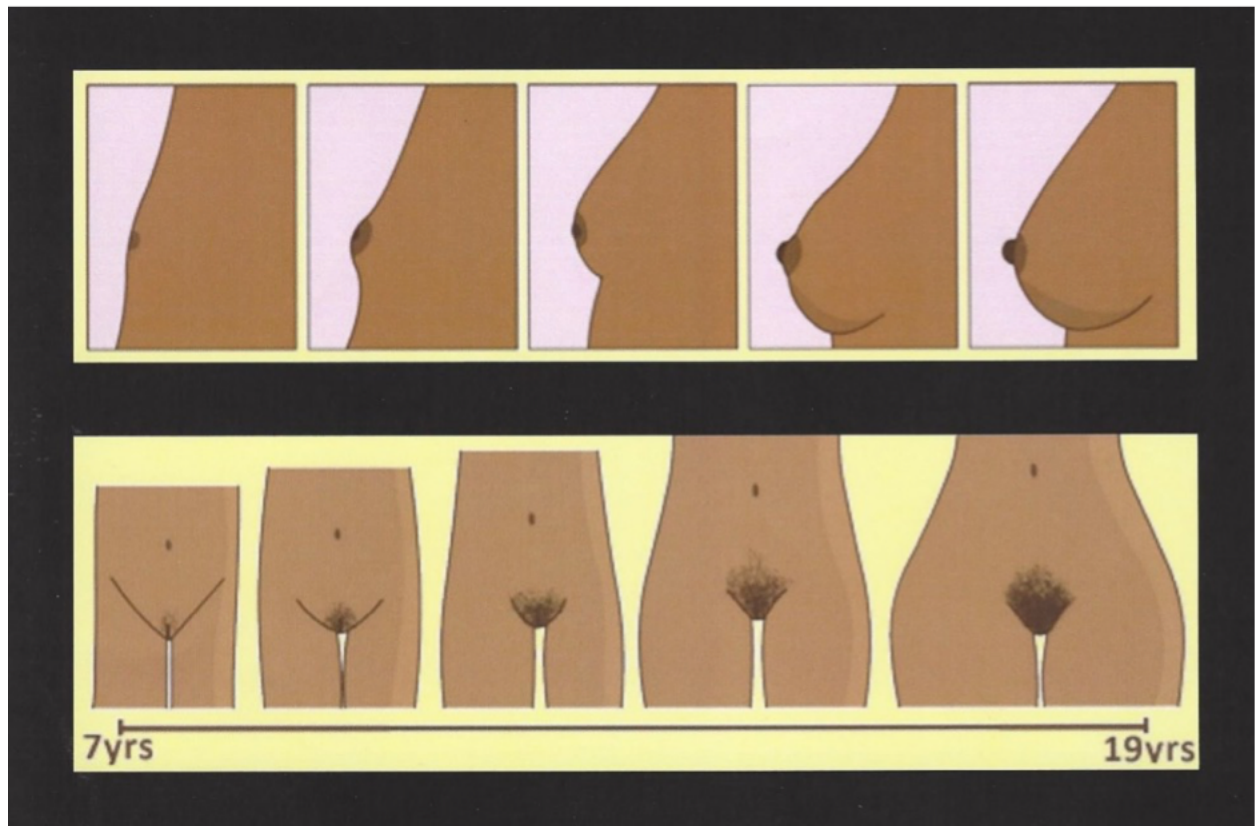


Diagram: Three Stages of Womanhood Timeline

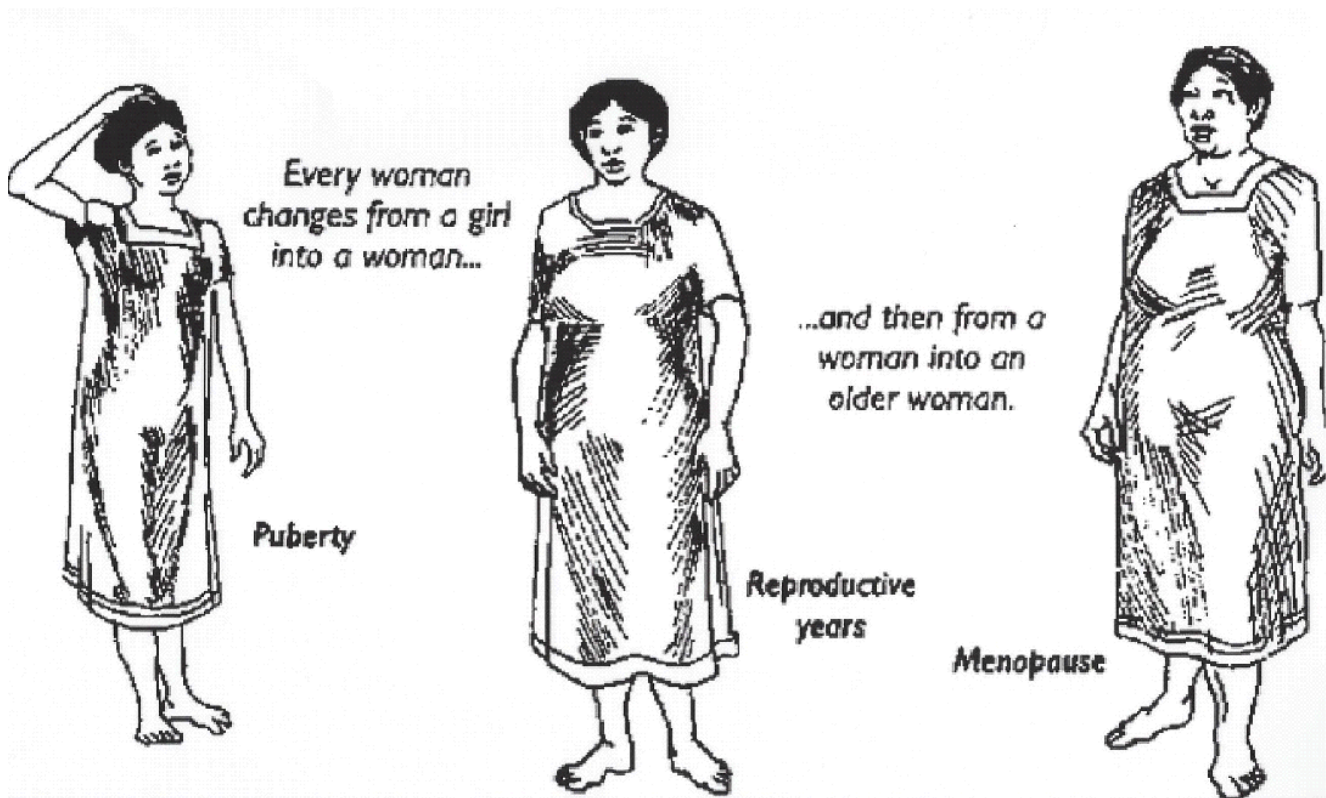
Handout: Changes in Puberty



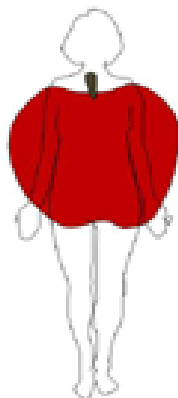
CHANGES IN PUBERTY



THREE STAGES OF WOMANHOOD

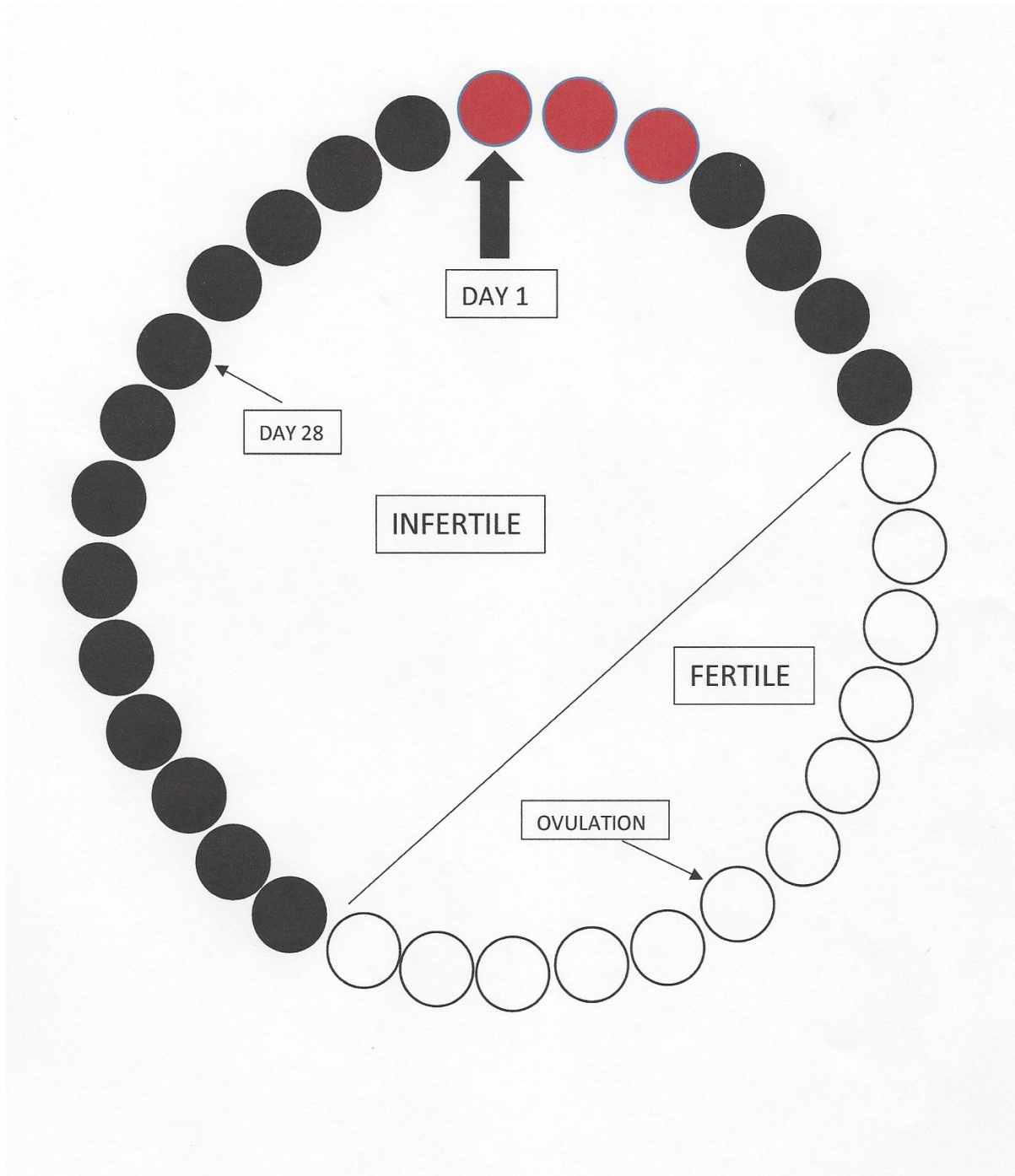


BODY SHAPE CHANGES IN MENOPAUSE



Menopause is thought to play a role in many women's midlife transition from a pear-shaped body to a more apple-shaped body.

MONTHLY CYCLE BEADS



HOW TO USE MONTHLY CYCLE BEADS

Monthly Cycle Beads help you keep track of your menstrual cycle. Each bead represents 1 day of your cycle. Monthly Cycle Beads work well for women whose cycles are normally between 26 and 32 days long.

The **RED** beads represent the first days of your period (menses, when bleeding starts). On the day your period starts mark the first **RED** bead with the marker clip, rubber ring or other way to mark. Each day move the marker to a new bead (**RED** to **RED**).

The **BLACK** beads mark the days you are least likely to become pregnant if you have unprotected sex.

The **WHITE** beads mark the days you are most likely to become pregnant if you have unprotected sex. If you want to avoid pregnancy, abstain from sex or use protection on those days. Having unprotected sex during the days marked by the **WHITE** beads increases the chance of becoming pregnant for those who are planning a pregnancy.

When your next menstrual cycle begins, move the marker to the first **RED** bead. If your period does not start by the day after you mark the last **BLACK** bead, your menstrual cycle is longer than 32 days (or you may be pregnant). If this happens more than once a year, Monthly Cycle Beads will not work well for you.

It is wise to also mark the first day of each period on a calendar, in case you forget to move your marker.

Remember:

RED bead #1 marks the first day of each menstrual cycle (the day bleeding begins).

BLACK beads mark the days you are least likely to get pregnant.

WHITE beads mark the days you are most likely to get pregnant.

To String Your Monthly Cycle Beads:

Lay string to the LEFT. From the right: Add 3 **RED (R)** beads. Add 4 **BLACK (B)** beads. Add 12 **WHITE (W)** beads. Add 13 **BLACK** beads. If you want to add a clasp to make it into a necklace, you can do that. Add the marker clip, rubber ring or other type of marker.
RRR BBBB WWWWWWWWWWWWW BBBB