



Taking Charge of Your Fertility: The Definitive Guide to Natural Birth Control, Pregnancy Achievement, and Reproductive Health

Toni Weschler

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Celebrating 10 years of helping hundreds of thousands of women achieve pregnancy, avoid pregnancy naturally, and gain better control of their health and lives, the 10th Anniversary Edition of the classic bestseller will include:

-New 'Preface to the 10th Anniversary Edition"

-Updates on new fertility technologies

-Natural approaches to conception

-Updated Resources and Books

For any woman unhappy with her current method of birth control; demoralized by her quest to have a baby; or experiencing confusing symptoms in her cycle, this book provides answers to all these questions, plus amazing insights into a woman's body. Weschler thoroughly explains the empowering Fertility Awareness Method, which in only a couple minutes a day allows a woman to:

-Enjoy highly effective, scientifically proven birth control without chemicals or devices

-Maximize her chances of conception or expedite fertility treatment by identifying impediments to conception

-Increase the likelihood of choosing the gender of her baby

-Gain control of her sexual and gynecological health

Taking Charge of Your Fertility: The Definitive Guide to Natural Birth Control, Pregnancy Achievement, and Reproductive Health Details

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Erika RS says

Before trying to get pregnant, it seemed appropriate to learn more about how female fertility works. For that, I chose this book.

The first, and perhaps most important, thing to know about this book is that it is a book every woman should read. Whether you want to get pregnant or avoid pregnancy, whether you're taking birth control pills or attempting more manual methods of contraception, if you're a woman who cares about how her body actually works, you should read this book. (Note: I use "you" and "your" throughout this review because it's more conversational. I acknowledge that this may be a bit awkward for any men reading this. Consider it an exercise in what it's like being in a situation whose "you" is not, in fact, you.)

It amazed me, when I started reading this book, how little I knew about my own fertility. While I think that birth control pills were the right contraceptive option for me during the years I wanted to avoid pregnancy — my ovulation cycle has always been much too irregular to depend on my physical signals — I am, in retrospect, sad that I spent over a decade taking a drug without understanding the system it was regulating. Now that I am trying to become pregnant and having a hard time, I regret accepting the explanation from my doctor that the pill would "fix" my extremely irregular cycles. Yes, it suppressed the symptoms, but now that I actually want to get pregnant, I still have the same issues and no more knowledge of them than I did as a teen. (By the way, Weschler also wrote a book targeted at teens, which I haven't read.)

Now to the book itself. This book is centered around the Fertility Awareness Method. This can be seen as a natural birth control method or a technique for helping achieve pregnancy. I see it as a way to understand how your own body works. Part one discusses these different perspectives and encourages women to take charge of their own fertility. Part two contains background on a women's reproductive anatomy, menstrual cycle, primary fertility signs, and various types of irregular cycles. Parts three and four apply knowledge of the primary fertility signals to, respectively, birth control and pregnancy achievement. Part five discusses other practical benefits of charting your cycle, even if you don't care about the other two.

As a final note, if avoiding pregnancy is absolutely vital for you, I cannot recommend the Fertility Awareness Method as a standalone method of birth control. Even if you're extremely regular normally, stress, sickness, alcohol, and other life factors can make your signals less reliable. But I still recommend reading the book.

Rori says

Recently picked up this book. Being a nurse and having worked in maternity with a long-running interest in women's health I considered myself to be quite knowledgeable of the subject matter, but I was amazed while reading this to realize how much I was ignorant of!

As another reviewer stated, I feel like this should be mandatory reading for all those in possession of a uterus

(and perhaps all people in general). That talk you got in 6th grade barely scratched the surface! Having watched people struggle with both effective pregnancy avoidance and pregnancy attainment I realize how little we know about what's up "down there"! Once again I've realized how much science and medicine has tried to boil the body down to a precise mechanism when it is truly anything but. And yet with some simple awareness of how things are supposed to work both on the part of the woman and the medical provider (I'm willing to bet many of them are largely ignorant of the information herein, as was I) there would be much more productive conversations that would lead to more satisfactory outcomes (regardless of the outcome you're seeking!).

Despite the thickness of this book it's actually quite a quick read. The information is clear and in depth, yet the conversational tone Weschler uses makes it accessible without being dry. The anecdotes interspersed throughout keep it from being too clinical. There are sections which you can skip over if they don't pertain to your space in life (natural family planning, infertility, menopause, etc.), but keeps it all in one book for when life might change and you'll be wanting those other chapters. Highly recommend this!

Jo says

I agree with nearly everyone else I know (and reviews from strangers) in that this book should be required reading for women and men regardless of their opinions on sex, pregnancy, etc. And yes, I do think men should read it too. Reproduction is not exactly a one-sided arrangement.

Truly is a great presentation of a lot of information about your reproductive health - from basic cycle patterns, potential problems & how to identify them, understanding the cause & effects of it all, & how to chart successfully whether you're avoiding pregnancy or trying to achieve it. If you're into data as much as this self-proclaimed data-dork is, I recommend charting your own cycles using the methods here. I've learned a lot about my own health, & feel much more informed & able to walk into the doctor's office with a whole lot more knowledge.

Katie says

Excellent resource book for ANY woman, not just those that are trying to get pregnant. I think I learned more about my body from this book than I ever did in Health Class! If you are interested in what is happening to your body and why your body does what it does, then you should get this book! It also has an entire chapter on women and Menopause.

Katherine Lewis says

This ought to be required reading for everyone in possession of a uterus.

It's totally famous and often recommended. However, I picked this hefty volume up once in B&N, and after leafing through several pages of complicated looking charts and completely gross close-up pictures of what-I-didn't-even-know, I nestled it back on the shelf and said to myself, "Well, I'll read that if I ever have any PROBLEMS with my junk 'down there.'" Fortunately, I happened upon it again in a Half-Price many months

later, and the low price convinced me to finally give it a go.

First of all, it is NOT as intimidating or scientifically dense as it appears at first flip through. The author adopts a very laid-back, humorous tone and approach to the whole topic, making it a friendly read for most anyone. Also, the length is not quite what it seems; the latter third is optional appendices for special topics and audiences, and the main portion of the book is filled with quickly-skimmed charts and cartoons.

Second, it is not, as many would think, just a book for those trying to get knocked up. It is about understanding your body, your rhythms, your internal signs and signals, and finally, your potential for fertility (whether you're in the camp who desires it or resents it, it's good to know where/when/what it is). Weschler describes a drug-free birth-control method, a common-sense conception method, troubleshooting for irregular or curious cycle behavior, comfort and control for menopause, and more.

I feel empowered for having read this, but I also felt a tinge of regret that I am only NOW reading this. Women deserve a better relationship, understanding, and view of their bodies than we're granted in the typical sex-ed class or gynecological office. This information is at once simple, accessible, and profound.

Elizabeth says

just wanted to take a moment to sing this book's praises. I consider myself to have had a pretty good sex education, but this book taught me just how little I actually learned (or, I should say, how little they actually taught me) about the menstrual cycle. This book is a fucking must-keep-by-your-bed-for-handy-reference if you are any bit the female health nerd that I am. You will learn so much about your own cycle, it will knock your socks off. If you are actually in the midst of trying to avoid pregnancy or get pregnant, this book will knock your panties off. It is a gem.

Hannah says

I wish I could give two and a half stars, because "liked it" is a little too strong for my mixed emotions about this book. Pros: great charts and pictures and very user-friendly, and a wonderful resource for learning more about your fertility. Cons: Fertility awareness seems like a perfectly good method for *getting* knocked up, but not preventing it, and I'm hesitant to recommend a book that actually promotes it as a method of birth control. Also, the non-informational writing is really cheesy and apparently targeted towards women with neanderthal husbands?

Ashleigh says

Note: I am using this book for its BIRTH CONTROL section, not its seemingly "getting pregnant" aura from the cover. So, that being said, this book was AWESOME! I have been wanting an effective way to get off of hormonal birth control because I believe it is the last puzzle piece in the search to cure my migraines. NOTE: THIS IS NOT THE RHYTHM METHOD WHICH IS A HIGHLY INEFFECTIVE FORM OF NATURAL BIRTH CONTROL!!! THIS IS NOT THE RHYTHM METHOD, I REPEAT. This book is so informative and very easy to read. While it may intimidate some, because it really does look like a textbook, it really isn't that long of a read. Especially because if you want to use it for birth control, you don't need to read the

"getting pregnant" or "pre-menopausal" sections and vice versa. Also, a lot of the Appendix sections in the back are merely reference and only apply to certain circumstances. This was such a great book and I know I will reference it for over half of my lifetime. I am also already thinking of giving his book as a gift to some of my female family members.

Christina says

I generally reserve 5* for books that change my life. This is one of them.

Tashaodd says

This book was recommended to me by my female doctor. While in nursing school I lent this book to one of my instructors who used the pictures to show the class about cervical fluids and what not. Amazing that most of those women in my class had no idea that cervical fluid had any relation to fertility! I would highly recommend this book to any female of menses age. The more women know about their bodies, the more empowered we become.

Rita says

I really wish they gave out this book instead of pads & tampons in 5th grade. It's ridiculous that I didn't find out how my body works until now, but, better late than not at all!

The book presents sympto-thermal charting in an understandable manner, but mainly focuses on trying to get pregnant rather than trying to avoid pregnancy. The principles can be used the other way around, but this book isn't necessarily a guide for using FAM as birth control, and doesn't contain a lot of info regarding transitioning off of hormonal birth control.

Otherwise, very informative with very clear diagrams and pictures. Even if you're not trying to avoid pregnancy or get pregnant, if you are female or in a relationship with a female, this is as close as you get to an owners manual for a uterus.

jko says

though she attempts to demonstrate objectivity, she definitely puts her pom-poms behind this method of birth control (which, i think she would like me to point out, **is not the rhythm method!**).

this is an essential, comprehensive, and empowering guide for anyone who wants to understand the gross physiology of being female and/or who wants to decrease or increase the potential for becoming pregnant without the *inconveniences* of pills, needles, latex, medical invasions, etc.

Jamie says

Well, it's pretty obvious what this book is about. Personally, I think it's a good one, and I give the software that comes with it four stars. It would be five stars, but it is pink and purple, and that diminishes it a bit.

I am an (usually rather quiet-ish) advocate of natural birth control, childbirth, and so on. I really like this book, although it is sometimes a bit overwhelming with the vast amount of information! Definitely a useful guide for any woman who would like to know a bit (or everything!) more about how her body works.

Francesca says

Basically this book is like my second bible. I first saw a copy next to my cousin's bed and was fascinated by the title, dipped in and then ordered my own copy! Toni Weschler is brilliant. This book literally changed my life and I really can't rate it highly enough. In it, Toni explains the sound scientific Fertility Awareness Method which, for a matter of a couple of minutes a day, can give you an understanding of your body that no biology book or visit to the doctors could possibly give you. By using the method, you can:

Practise a completely natural and over 99% effective birth control method (actually, it CAN be higher than this- any failure is down to "user failure"- i.e. non-practise of the method)

Help identify any fertility problems BEFORE running to the doctor and getting involved in invasive diagnostics tests

Know whether you ovulated in any given cycle-or not

Know the best days to get a smear test, and to check for breast lumps

Know if you're period is going to be late, beforehand and without rushing out to get a pregnancy test in panic

Understand all those signs throughout the month that most women are too afraid to ask other women about

Identify when you can get pregnant (and when to use protection!) and even help weigh the odds to male/female. Know that you're pregnant without having to buy a test.

Keep a check on your own health by identifying any warning signs or abnormalities

Accurately predict due dates

KNOW that your cycle, as with those of most women, does not usually conform to the "28 day" model, nor do all women ovulate on day 14! And know that its normal

Used as birth control this method, obviously won't suit all, but it is worth just knowing what's going on in your body.

Remarkable. I can vouch for the reliability of this method WHEN USED correctly.

Holly says

I have to agree with another reviewer and simply say that this book changed my life, and after reading it for the first time a few years ago I'm surprised that I waited so long to review it. I can't remember exactly how I came upon it but it was literally a lifesaver for me when I was at a very depressing time in my life as I struggled with infertility. Though not only for those trying to conceive, it's hands down the best and IMO the only book women who are in the early stages of fertility issues should read. Living up to it's title it actually gives you something you and only you can do to "take charge" of your situation and find answers that oftentimes will be more revealing and telling than what a doctor, biology book, or pregnancy test can tell you.

While *TAKING CHARGE* does outline the scientific Fertility Awareness Method (FAM), or basal body temperature charting and all the ins and outs of using the method, it's super easy to understand and follow. The method requires only an oral thermometer and a minute every morning to take your temperature, daily monitoring of your cervical fluid and a chart to record your observations. I used my charts to pinpoint exactly what day I would be ovulating, which turned out to be much later in my cycle than average. Not coincidentally a few months after charting consistently I got pregnant. For that reason alone I cannot recommend this book heartily enough. But it's equally about headache-free natural birth control methods, detecting delays in menstruation/ovulation, and detecting hormone imbalances and the onset of menopause as it is about successful pregnancy achievement (before a positive test is reliable), impending menstruation, and a probable miscarriage (before any spotting). So bottom line even if you're not trying to conceive at this point in your life, please read this book, you will not be disappointed.
