



# Standard Days Method™

of Family Planning

## Reference Guide for Counseling Clients

# *Reference Guide for Counseling Clients*



The Institute for Reproductive Health at Georgetown University, is dedicated to the development of simple and effective natural methods of family planning. The Institute applies and advances available scientific knowledge about reproductive physiology to develop new natural methods and to provide couples around the world with simple and effective family planning options.

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# *Introduction*



## *What is the Standard Days Method?*

Helping women and couples choose a family planning method that meets their needs is an important element of good quality reproductive health care — and of informed choice. A natural method that is easy to teach, learn and use is now available as a family planning option. This method is the Standard Days Method™ (SDM).\*

The SDM is a natural method of family planning developed by the Institute for Reproductive Health at Georgetown University. It is based on the fact that there are certain days during a woman's menstrual cycle when she can become pregnant. The SDM helps women identify the days in their cycle when they are likely to become pregnant if they have unprotected intercourse, and the days when pregnancy is very unlikely. Couples who use the SDM to avoid or delay pregnancy can have unprotected intercourse on any day of the woman's cycle except days 8 through 19.<sup>1</sup> The SDM works best for women who have regular menstrual cycles between 26 and 32 days long<sup>2</sup>.

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\*Standard Days Method is trademark of Georgetown University.

<sup>1</sup>Arevalo M, Jennings V, Sinai I, A fixed formula to define the fertile window of the menstrual cycle as the basis of a simple method of natural family planning. *Contraception*, 1999;60:357-360.

<sup>2</sup> Arevalo M, Jennings V, Sinai I, Efficacy of a new method of family planning: the Standard Days Method. *Contraception*, 2002;65:333-338.

Many women who use the SDM use a string of colored beads called CycleBeads™\* to help them keep track of their cycles. CycleBeads are an important part of SDM counseling because they help a client understand the method and use it correctly.

The SDM was tested in an international efficacy study that showed it is more than 95% effective when used correctly.

This Reference Guide for Counseling Clients was designed to provide programs and providers with a comprehensive resource on how to correctly advise and inform women and couples on the use of the SDM. The guide is meant to be simple and straightforward—and can be used by a wide range of service providers. The guide describes the basic eligibility criteria for using the SDM and outlines the various aspects involved in the counseling process for new users of the SDM. There is also information on how to handle follow-up visits should the client have additional concerns—or if the provider feels that a follow-up visit is necessary. The guide also includes easy-to-use job aids that can be pulled out and used by providers on a day-to-day basis while counseling clients on the SDM. These include a Provider Calendar to calculate cycle length, Checklist(s) to screen clients during initial and follow-up visits, and a Provider Cue Card for explaining how to use CycleBeads.

## *What is involved in SDM counseling?*

Counseling in the SDM involves:

- Helping women determine if the method is appropriate for them.
- Providing them with the information and tools they need to understand the instructions and use the method correctly.
- Helping them manage the fertile days with their partners.
- Encouraging them to return for additional information and services as appropriate.

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\*CycleBeads are a patent-pending technology and a trademark of Georgetown University.

## *Who can use the SDM?*

The majority of women can use the SDM. A woman can use the SDM if:

1. she has regular menstrual cycles between 26 and 32 days long;  
and
2. she and her partner can avoid unprotected intercourse on days when she can get pregnant.

This method is appropriate for women who meet the criteria mentioned previously, EXCEPT:

- ❑ Postpartum or breastfeeding women until they have had three menstrual cycles (i.e. four consecutive periods), and their most recent cycle was between 26 and 32 days long.
- ❑ Users of the 3-month contraceptive injection, until 3 months have passed since the last injection and their most recent cycle was between 26 and 32 days long.

There are no restrictions for using the SDM among women who recently have used oral contraceptives, one-month injection, implant, or emergency contraception. These women can use the SDM if their cycles prior to using these methods lasted between 26 and 32 days.

Women who recently used an IUD can use the SDM if their cycles while using the IUD were between 26 and 32 days long. Use of the IUD does not affect cycle length.

Women who recently experienced an abortion or a miscarriage also can use the SDM if their cycles prior to becoming pregnant lasted between 26 and 32 days.

The method eligibility criteria are summarized on page 4.

## Standard Days Method

### Method Eligibility Criteria

Who can use the Standard Days Method?

- Women with menstrual cycles between 26 and 32 days long.
- Women who can avoid unprotected intercourse on days when they can get pregnant.

#### Exceptions:

- Postpartum or breastfeeding women, unless they have completed three cycles (four consecutive periods), and their most recent cycle was between 26 and 32 days long.
- Users of the 3-month contraceptive injection, unless 3 months have passed since the last injection, and their most recent cycle was between 26 and 32 days long.

#### Considerations:

- Current users of hormonal methods must have had cycles between 26 and 32 days long before using the hormonal method.
- IUD users must have had cycles between 26 and 32 days long while using the IUD.
- Women recently experiencing a miscarriage or an abortion must have had cycles between 26 and 32 days long before becoming pregnant.

The Standard Days Method does not protect against HIV/AIDS or sexually transmitted infections.

# *Assess if the SDM is Appropriate for the Woman and Her Partner*

## *What is involved in the assessment?*

- Determine the length and regularity of the woman's menstrual cycle.
  
- Determine if there is any circumstance or current condition that may affect the woman's cycle length and regularity such as:
  - If she is postpartum and breastfeeding.
  - If she recently had a miscarriage or abortion, or has used emergency contraception.
  - If she recently has used the 3-month contraceptive injection.
  - If she recently used another hormonal method of family planning.
  
- Help the woman determine if the SDM is appropriate for her and her partner.
  
- Determine when the woman can start using the SDM.

■ **Determine the length of the woman's menstrual cycle.**

*Ask the client:*

- *Do you get your period every month? or Do you usually get your period when you expect it?*
- *When was the first day of your most recent period?*
- *Was it a normal period for you?*
- *When do you expect your next period?*
- *Does your period usually come earlier or later than you expect it?*

Establish if the woman's menstrual cycles are usually between 26 and 32 days long. When asking the questions, use the provider calendar (included as a job aid) to mark the first day of her most

recent period and the day she expects her next period. Then count the days between these two periods to determine the woman's cycle length.

The cycle length includes all days between the first day of her last period and the day before she expects her next period.

Example:

**February**

| S  | M  | T  | W  | T  | F  | S  |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
|    |    |    |    |    | 1  | 2  |
| 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  |
| 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |    |    |
|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |

**March**

| S  | M  | T  | W  | T  | F  | S  |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
|    |    |    |    |    | 1  | 2  |
| 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  |
| 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |
| 31 |    |    |    |    |    |    |

First day of last period: Feb 12

Expected date of next period: March 14

Cycle length: 30 days

(Cycle began on Feb 12 and ended on March 13. On March 14 a new cycle started.)

■ **Determine if there is any circumstance or current condition that may affect the woman's cycle length and regularity.**

Check to see if:

- she is postpartum or breastfeeding.
- she recently had a miscarriage or abortion, or has used emergency contraception.
- she recently has used the 3-month contraceptive injection.
- she recently used another hormonal method of family planning.

□ **Determine if the woman has recently given birth or is currently breastfeeding.**

For a woman who is postpartum, currently breastfeeding, or has recently breastfed, determine if: (1) her periods have returned; (2) she has had at least three menstrual cycles (four consecutive periods); and (3) her most recent cycle was between 26 and 32 days long. She cannot use the SDM until she meets these conditions.

Ask the client:

- *Have you given birth recently?*
- *How old is your youngest child?*
- *Are you currently breastfeeding?*
- *Has your period returned?*
- *How many periods have you had since your baby was born?*
- *Are your periods regular? or, Do they come when you expect them?*
- *How long was your most recent cycle? (use calendar, if necessary, to determine the client's cycle length)*

□ **Check for recent use of the 3-month contraceptive injection.**

Ask the client:

- *Before using the 3-month contraceptive injection, did your periods come when you expected them?*
- *How often did you get your period? Did you get your period approximately every month?*
- *When did you have the last injection? (Determine whether at least 3 months have passed since her last injection.)*
- *When were you supposed to get your next injection?*

Determine if her most recent cycle was between 26 and 32 days long:

- *How many periods have you had since you stopped using this method?*
- *When did you get your last period?*
- *Approximately when did you get the period before that one?*
- *Were these two periods approximately a month apart?*

To use the SDM, a woman who has recently used the 3-month injection must have stopped using the injection (i.e. 3 months must have passed since she had her last injection). Also, her most recent cycle must have been between 26 and 32 days long. She cannot use the SDM until she meets these conditions.

□ **Check for current or recent use of another family planning method.**

Ask the client:

- *Before using the pill, implant or 1-month injection, did your periods come when you expected them?*
- *Did you get your periods when you expected them while using the IUD?*

Establish if the woman's cycles lasted between 26 and 32 days before using any of these hormonal methods. For IUD users, determine if their cycles were between 26 and 32 days long while using it.

□ **Check for recent miscarriage, abortion, or use of emergency contraception.**

If a woman recently had a miscarriage, abortion or used emergency contraception, determine if her menstrual cycles prior to getting pregnant or using emergency contraception were between 26 and 32 days long. If yes, she is advised to begin using the SDM the day she gets her next period. She should use another method until her next period starts.

Ask the client:

- *Have you recently been pregnant and lost/interrupted your pregnancy?*
- *Before you got pregnant, did your periods come when you expected them?*
- *Has the bleeding related with your pregnancy loss stopped?*
- *Have you recently used emergency contraception?*
- *Have you had your period again?*

The aspects to consider while assessing if the SDM is appropriate for the woman are summarized in the Provider Job Aid on page 12.

■ **Help the woman determine if the SDM is appropriate for her and her partner.**

*i* Inform the client:

*The SDM can be used successfully, if:*

- *Both partners agree to use the method.*
- *The couple is able to discuss and decide when to have children.*
- *The couple is willing and able to avoid unprotected intercourse during the fertile (white-bead) days when the woman can get pregnant.*
- *Neither partner is at risk of getting a sexually transmitted infection.*
- *Both partners feel safe with each other and free to say no to having sex.*
- *Both partners can discuss and make decisions regarding when to have sex. They can also discuss how to avoid unprotected intercourse on days when she can get pregnant.*

Assess if the couple communicates about whether to have sex and how to prevent pregnancy.

A woman might have concerns about whether this method can be used with her partner's participation and support. Establish with her whether the method fits with the couple's lifestyle.

*a* Ask the client:

- *Have you and your partner talked about when you want to have a child (your next child)?*
- *Have you agreed that it is important to both of you not to get pregnant right now?*
- *How do you think your partner will react to avoiding unprotected sex on the white bead days? What about you?*
- *Can you think of situations when avoiding sex might create a problem in your relationship? What has his reaction been in the past when you haven't wanted to have sex and he does? How have you dealt with his reaction in the past?*
- *How might you and your partner let each other know which days you can have sex and which days unprotected sex is likely to result in a pregnancy?*
- *What problems do you think you and your partner may have using this method?*
- *People who have sex with more than one person without a condom risk getting a sexually transmitted infection?*
- *Since you have been involved with this partner, have either of you been diagnosed with a sexually transmitted infection?*
- *Do you think you or your partner might be at risk of getting a sexually transmitted infection?*

■ **Determine when the woman can start using the SDM.**

If the woman meets the criteria for using the SDM and remembers the date of her last period, she can start using the SDM immediately.

(The criteria for starting the method are summarized on page 13.)

After explaining how to use CycleBeads (described on page 16), give her one set of CycleBeads with the ring placed on the bead corresponding to today's date.

*i* Inform the client:

*For a client who is beyond day 7 of her cycle, inform her that she may be pregnant if she has had intercourse during this cycle. Tell her that if her period does not come within a few days after she expects it, she should go to a health provider for a pregnancy test and appropriate referral.*

● *Pill user:*

*If a woman is still taking the pill at the time she is informed about the SDM, advise her to finish using her current pack of pills. Tell her she can begin using the SDM the day she gets her next period.*

● *IUD or implant user:*

*If a woman still has the IUD or implant at the time she is informed about the SDM, advise her to wait until it has been removed. Tell her she can begin using the SDM the day she gets her next period after the IUD or implant has been removed.*

*Tell her that if the IUD is removed while she is still having her period, she can start the SDM immediately, if she remembers the first day of her period.*

● *1-month injection user:*

*If a woman recently has used the 1-month injection advise her to begin using the SDM the day she gets her next period.*

If the woman DOES NOT remember when her last period started, give her CycleBeads with the ring on the red bead and advise her to start using the method as soon as she gets her next period (see page 16 for how to use CycleBeads). Also, advise her to avoid unprotected intercourse until her period comes or she may become pregnant before she begins using the SDM.

Standard Days Method  
Provider Job Aid — Initial Visit

Assessment Criteria for Method Eligibility

Can the SDM work for the woman?

|           |  |            |
|-----------|--|------------|
| <b>NO</b> | Does the woman have regular cycles between 26 and 32 days long?  | <b>YES</b> |
| <b>NO</b> | Do her periods usually come when she expects them?   | <b>YES</b> |
| <b>NO</b> | If she is postpartum or breastfeeding, has her menses returned and has she had at least three consecutive cycles? Was her last cycle between 26 and 32 days long?  | <b>YES</b> |
| <b>NO</b> | If she was using the 3-month contraceptive injection, have three months passed since the last injection? Was her last cycle between 26 and 32 days long?   | <b>YES</b> |
| <b>NO</b> | If she was using oral contraceptives, the implant, the 1-month injection, or emergency contraception, were her cycles prior to using any of these methods between 26 and 32 days long? Was her last cycle between 26 and 32 days long? | <b>YES</b> |
| <b>NO</b> | If she had an IUD, did her cycles last between 26 and 32 days while using the IUD ?  | <b>YES</b> |
| <b>NO</b> | If she recently had a miscarriage or an abortion, did her cycles last between 26 and 32 days before getting pregnant?  | <b>YES</b> |
| <b>NO</b> | Has she decided that the method is appropriate for her and her partner?  | <b>YES</b> |

Can the SDM work for the couple?

|           |   |            |
|-----------|---|------------|
| <b>NO</b> | Do both partners want to avoid pregnancy at this time?  | <b>YES</b> |
| <b>NO</b> | Do both partners think they can avoid unprotected sexual intercourse on days when the woman can get pregnant? | <b>YES</b> |
| <b>NO</b> | Are both partners free of risk for sexually transmitted infections?   | <b>YES</b> |

If the answer is **NO** to any of the above questions, the SDM is not appropriate for the woman and her partner.

If the answer to the above questions is **YES**, the SDM is appropriate for the woman and her partner.

## Standard Days Method

### Criteria for Starting the Method

When can women who meet the SDM selection criteria start using the method?

Women who remember the date of their last period can start using the method immediately by placing the ring on today's bead.

If they are beyond day 7 of their cycle, and had unprotected intercourse during this cycle, they should be informed that they may already be pregnant.

Women who DO NOT remember the date of their last period can start using the method when their next period begins.

Advise them to avoid unprotected intercourse until their next period starts. Also, if they are beyond day 7 of their cycle and had unprotected intercourse during this cycle, inform them that they could already be pregnant.

Women using the pill, 1-month contraceptive injection, IUD or implant can start using the method when their next period begins.

Women using the pill should complete their current pack of pills.  
Women using an IUD or implant should avoid unprotected intercourse from the time it is removed until their next period starts.

Women who recently had a miscarriage or abortion or used emergency contraception can start using the method when their next period begins.

They should be advised to avoid unprotected intercourse until their next period starts.



# *Inform How the SDM Works and Check Client Understanding*

## *What is involved in informing the client?*

- Describe the SDM to the client and explain how to use CycleBeads.
- Confirm that the client knows how to use CycleBeads.

■ Describe the SDM to the client and explain how to use CycleBeads.

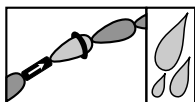


**PROVIDER CUE CARD**

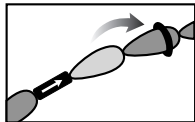
**GENERAL INFORMATION**

- CycleBeads are based on a natural family planning method called the Standard Days Method™ (SDM). This method is more than 95% effective when used correctly.
- CycleBeads help a woman know on which days she can get pregnant. Using CycleBeads she keeps track of her menstrual cycle days and knows when to avoid unprotected intercourse in order to prevent a pregnancy.
- CycleBeads represent the menstrual cycle. The woman's menstrual cycle begins on the first day of her period (menstrual bleeding) and ends the day before her next period starts. Each bead is a day of the cycle. The RED bead marks the first day of her period. The WHITE beads represent days when a woman CAN GET PREGNANT. The BROWN beads represent days when pregnancy is very unlikely.
- A woman can use this method if her cycles are between 26 and 32 days long. To use it effectively, the couple needs to avoid unprotected intercourse on days when the woman can get pregnant.

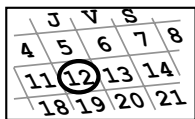
**INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE**



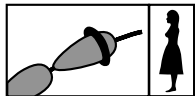
On the first day of your period, move the black ring to the RED bead.  
Also mark that day on your calendar.



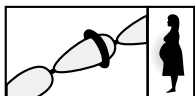
Every morning move the ring to the next bead. Always move the ring in the direction of the arrow, from narrow to wide end.  
Move the ring even on days when you have your period.



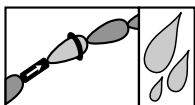
If you forget whether you moved the ring, check in your calendar when your period began. Count the days since your period began and move the ring the same number of beads starting with the RED bead.



When the ring is on a BROWN bead you can have unprotected intercourse.  
These are days when pregnancy is very unlikely.



When the ring is on a WHITE bead day, avoid unprotected intercourse.  
These are days when you can get pregnant if you have unprotected intercourse.



The day your next period starts, move the ring to the RED bead again. Skip over any remaining beads. Your period signals that a new cycle has started.



Contact your provider if you start your period before you put the ring on the DARK BROWN bead. Also contact your provider if you have not started your period by the day after you put the ring on the last BROWN bead.

Also contact your provider if:

- you have any vaginal bleeding between your periods
- you think you may have a sexually transmitted disease
- you have unprotected intercourse on a WHITE bead day



To use the SDM correctly, the woman should know how to use CycleBeads. Explain that CycleBeads are color-coded to provide a visual way for the woman to track her menstrual cycle. Each bead represents a single day of her cycle. The black cylinder with the arrow shows the direction to move the ring. It does not count as a day of her cycle.



Check CycleBeads with the client. There are 32 beads, 1 black cylinder with an arrow, and 1 black rubber ring. The beads are in the following order: 1 red bead, followed by 6 dark beads, followed by 12 white, the next 7 are brown, the next one is dark brown, the next 5 are brown, and the black cylinder with the arrow is last.

■ **Confirm that the client knows how to use CycleBeads and the Calendar.**

*a* Ask the client:

- *Using CycleBeads and the calendar, show me how you will use the method.*
- *What do you do when you get your period?*
- *When do you move the ring?*
- *Do you move the ring on days of menstrual bleeding?*
- *What do the brown beads mean?*
- *What do the white beads mean?*
- *How will you keep from getting pregnant?*
- *How will you explain CycleBeads to your partner?*
- *What will you do if you or your partner want to have sexual intercourse on a day you can get pregnant (white-bead days)?*
- *What should you do if your period comes before you put the ring on the dark brown bead?*
- *What should you do if your period has not started by the day after you move the ring to the last brown bead?*
- *How comfortable do you feel going home with this method?*

Establish whether the woman has learned how to use the method correctly and can remember the information. Give her CycleBeads and a calendar. Ask her to show how she plans to use the method.

# *Support Couple's Use of the Method*

## *What is involved in supporting the couple's use of the method?*

There are three key elements in determining whether the SDM can work for the couple prior to initiating use. However, these elements touch on issues that are highly personal in nature and exploring them requires sensitivity and skill. It is often easier to discuss contraceptive history and menstrual cycles with a client, than it is to discuss relationships and interactions between partners. In this section, you will find some guidelines for addressing these key issues for supporting the couple's use of the method.

- Identify potential problems the couple may have using the SDM and encourage behaviors that will support correct method use.
- Help the woman identify possible solutions to the problems she has identified.
- Schedule a follow-up visit if necessary.

During this process, it is important to remember that good interviewing and counseling skills will help the client share information and actively participate in the counseling process. It is important for the provider to be non-judgmental—remember that judgment can be communicated with words, facial expression, tone of voice, and body language.

■ **Identify potential problems the couple may have using the SDM and encourage behaviors that will support correct method use.**

Ask the client:

- *What are some ways that you can imagine your partner participating in using CycleBeads?*
- *How will you let your partner know which days you can or cannot have unprotected intercourse?*
- *What are some ways that you can think of to prevent pregnancy during the fertile (white bead) days? What do you think that your partner will want to do to prevent pregnancy on the white bead days?*
- *How will you and your partner decide on a pregnancy prevention plan for the white bead days?*
- *How do you think your partner will react to avoiding unprotected intercourse on the days you can get pregnant (white-bead days)? What about you?*
- *Do you think you and your partner may have any problems using the SDM? What problems might you have?*

Explain to the woman that you would like to talk about the couple's relationship in order to help them use the method correctly. Acknowledge that many women feel uncomfortable talking about their relationship and emphasize that the SDM is a method that requires both partners' participation and cooperation. To set the stage for sensitive questioning, let her know that you understand that these questions may make her feel uncomfortable, and reassure her that your conversation will be confidential. Encourage her to

be honest and open so that you can work together to decide if the method is right for her. Assure her that this information will remain confidential—you will not discuss the information she shares with you with anyone else, including her partner, without her permission.

Use open-ended questions to get a sense of the client's context and situation. Close-ended questions (which can be answered with a "yes" or "no") are useful when you need specific information, but you will get only the information that you ask for. By engaging the client in problem solving, the counselor can support her in finding solutions that will work in her situation.

Be alert to potential sources of problems such as rigid adherence to typical sex roles in sexual decision making (the man decides, the women submits), alcohol or other drug use, domestic violence, and long periods of separation due to travel/work schedules.

■ **Help the woman identify possible solutions to the problems she has identified.**

Depending on the problems she identified, discuss whether the SDM is a method which she and her partner can use successfully. Some of the issues that could come up, such as serious substance involvement and domestic violence, may require referrals for counseling or other follow-up. Make sure that the woman who is not a good candidate for this method due to relationship issues has the opportunity to discuss other pregnancy prevention options. If the SDM appears to be a good option for the couple, explore ways for her to facilitate communication with her partner about the fertile days. Ask how both partners might react to avoiding unprotected intercourse on the days with the white beads and discuss ways to deal with difficulties that might arise.

**S**uggestions for Involving Partners

- *Talk with your partner when you are both in relaxed and positive moods.*
- *Explore ways to let your partner know when you do and do not want to have sex, with and without words.*
- *Display CycleBeads in a prominent place.*
- *Involve your partner in moving the ring.*
- *Suggest that your partner talk with the provider, individually or as a couple.*
- *Think of ways to solve any problems you have identified.*

Suggestions for Managing the Fertile (white-bead) Days

- *Have intercourse on more of the days when pregnancy is very unlikely (brown-bead days).*
- *Talk ahead of time with your partner about what you should do if he wants to have sex on days you can get pregnant (white-bead days).*
- *If alcohol or other drug use may be a problem, talk with your partner ahead of time about what to do if one of you have been drinking or using other drugs and wants to have sex.*
- *Sleep apart or with children.*
- *Plan work or travel around days when you can get pregnant (white-bead days).*
- *Find other ways partners can satisfy each other.*
- *Find other ways to spend time with your partner.*

■ **Schedule a follow-up visit if necessary.**

Ask the woman to return with her CycleBeads and calendar around the time when her next period starts. Invite her to bring her partner to the next visit. Ask the woman to return if any questions or concerns arise.

# *Follow-up Visit: Assess if the SDM Still Works for the Woman and Her Partner*

## *What is involved in the Follow-up visit?*

- Assess if the SDM still works for the woman.
  - Check if her most recent menstrual cycle was within the 26 to 32-day range.
  - Check for possible pregnancy or bleeding between periods.
  
- Assess if the SDM still works for the couple.
  - Determine if the couple still wants to use the method, and can avoid unprotected sexual intercourse on days with white beads.
  - Determine if the couple is able to use the method correctly.

■ **Assess if the SDM still works for the woman.**

- Check if the woman's most recent cycle was within the 26 to 32-day range.

*i* Inform the client:

*If all her cycles are between 26 and 32 days long, inform her that she can continue to use the method.*

*If she has had only one cycle out of the 26 to 32 day range, inform her that she may still use the method. However, she should be careful and pay close attention to the length of her cycle. Inform her that the method may not continue to work for her if she gets her period before placing the ring on the dark brown bead or doesn't get it the day after she places the ring on the last brown bead. If this happens again, she is at risk of getting pregnant and therefore should consider other methods.*

*If she has had two or more cycles outside the 26 to 32 day range, the SDM will not be effective for her. She may become pregnant because her cycle lengths have changed. She should consider other methods of family planning.*

Look at the woman's calendar to see if she has had any cycles shorter than 26 or longer than 32 days.

To determine the length of the woman's cycle, check her calendar or ask her when her last period started and when she expects her next period. Count the days between both periods to calculate the length of her cycle. Refer to page 6 for an example of how to calculate cycle duration.


- Check for possible pregnancy or bleeding between periods.

If the woman thinks she may be pregnant or if 42 days or more have passed since her last period started, offer to do a pregnancy test or refer her for testing.

If the pregnancy test is negative and this is the first time her cycle is outside the 26 to 32 day range, she may continue to use method with caution. She should return if she has a delayed period again.

If the pregnancy test is positive, offer her appropriate counseling and refer the woman for prenatal care.

If the woman reports bleeding between periods, determine by her description whether it is just minor spotting signaling the approach of ovulation.

 Inform the client:

*In case of minor spotting, inform the woman that this is a normal sign of impending ovulation, rather than a sign of a health problem. Otherwise counsel her according to the service delivery guidelines or refer her for assessment of unusual vaginal bleeding.*

*a* Ask the client:

- *Do you and your partner still want to avoid pregnancy?*
- *Have you both been able to avoid unprotected intercourse on the days when you can get pregnant (white-bead days)?*
- *What have you been doing to avoid unprotected sex during your fertile time? Are you comfortable with the approach you have been using? Do you think that your partner is comfortable? Have any situations come up where you or he has not been able to follow the plan you agreed on for the white bead days?*
- *Have you had any other sex partners other than your main partner since starting the SDM? Do you think that your partner has had sex with anyone other than you?*
- *Is there anything about using the SDM that you are unsure of, unhappy about, or uncomfortable with? Is there anything about using the SDM which you think your partner is unhappy about or uncomfortable with?*
- *Are you both satisfied with the SDM?*

*a* Ask the client:

- *Using CycleBeads and the calendar, show me how you use the method.*
- *What do you do when you get your period?*
- *When do you move the ring?*
- *Do you move the ring on days of menstrual bleeding?*
- *What do the brown beads mean?*
- *What do the white beads mean?*
- *How do you keep from getting pregnant?*
- *How do you explain CycleBeads to your partner?*
- *What do you do if you or your partner want to have intercourse on a day you can get pregnant (white-bead days)?*
- *What should you do if your period comes before you put the ring on the dark brown bead?*
- *What should you do if your period has not started by the day after you moved the ring to the last brown bead?*
- *How comfortable are you with this method?*
- *Have you ever had vaginal bleeding at unusual times?*
- *Do you have any questions about how to use CycleBeads?*

■ **Assess if the SDM still works for the couple.**

□ The follow up visit is an ideal time to engage the client the client of couple in concrete problem-solving related to using the SDM properly. Determine if the couple still wants to use the SDM and can avoid unprotected sexual intercourse on white bead days.

Review the couple's reasons for starting the SDM. Make sure that their goal of avoiding pregnancy remains the same and that they are still able to avoid unprotected intercourse on the white bead days. Assess whether either of them are at risk of sexually transmitted infections. Make sure that they are satisfied with the method.

- Determine if the couple is able to use the method correctly.  
Provide the woman with CycleBeads and a calendar.  
Ask her to show how she and her partner have been using the method. Correct any mistakes and review main points.  
The aspects to cover during a follow-up visit are summarized in the Provider Job Aid on page 27.

Standard Days Method  
 Provider Job Aid — Follow-up Visit

Assessment Criteria for Method Continuation

Does the SDM still work for the woman?

|    |  |     |
|----|--|-----|
| NO | Have her menstrual cycles been between 26 and 32 days long?  | YES |
| NO | Was her most recent cycle still between 26 and 32 days long? | YES |

Does the SDM still work for the couple?

|    |  |     |
|----|--|-----|
| NO | Do both partners still want to avoid pregnancy at this time?   | YES |
| NO | Is the couple able to avoid unprotected intercourse on the days when she can get pregnant (white-bead days)? | YES |
| NO | Are both partners free of risk for sexually transmitted infections?  | YES |
| NO | Are both partners satisfied with the method and do they want to continue using it?                           | YES |
| NO | Is the couple able to use CycleBeads correctly?  | YES |

▲  
 If the answer to one of these questions is NO, the SDM may not continue to work well for the woman and her partner

▲  
 If the answer to all of these questions is YES, the SDM should continue to work for the woman and her partner

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# Standard Days Method

## Provider Job Aid - Initial Visit

### Assessment Criteria for Method Eligibility

#### Can the SDM work for the woman?

|    |  |     |
|----|--|-----|
| NO | Does the woman have regular cycles between 26 and 32 days long?  | YES |
| NO | Do her periods usually come when she expects them?   | YES |
| NO | If she is postpartum or breastfeeding, has her menses returned and has she had at least three consecutive cycles? Was her last cycle between 26 and 32 days long?  | YES |
| NO | If she was using the 3-month contraceptive injection, have three months passed since the last injection? Was her last cycle between 26 and 32 days long?   | YES |
| NO | If she was using oral contraceptives, the implant, the 1-month injection, or emergency contraception, were her cycles prior to using any of these methods between 26 and 32 days long? Was her last cycle between 26 and 32 days long? | YES |
| NO | If she had an IUD, did her cycles last between 26 and 32 days while using the IUD ?  | YES |
| NO | If she recently had a miscarriage or an abortion, did her cycles last between 26 and 32 days before getting pregnant?  | YES |
| NO | Has she decided that the method is appropriate for her and her partner?  | YES |

#### Can the SDM work for the couple?

|    |   |     |
|----|---|-----|
| NO | Do both partners want to avoid pregnancy at this time?  | YES |
| NO | Do both partners think they can avoid unprotected sexual intercourse on days when the woman can get pregnant? | YES |
| NO | Are both partners free of risk for sexually transmitted infections?   | YES |

**If the answer is NO to any of the above questions, the SDM is not appropriate for the woman and her partner.**

**If the answer to the above questions is YES, the SDM is appropriate for the woman and her partner.**

Provider Job Aid - Follow-up Visit

**Assessment Criteria for Method Continuation**

**Does the SDM still work for the woman?**

|    |  |     |
|----|--|-----|
| NO | Have her menstrual cycles been between 26 and 32 days long?  | YES |
| NO | Was her most recent cycle still between 26 and 32 days long? | YES |

**Does the SDM still work for the couple?**

|    |  |     |
|----|--|-----|
| NO | Do both partners still want to avoid pregnancy at this time?   | YES |
| NO | Is the couple able to avoid unprotected intercourse on the days when she can get pregnant (white-bead days)? | YES |
| NO | Are both partners free of risk for sexually transmitted infections?  | YES |
| NO | Are both partners satisfied with the method and do they want to continue using it?                           | YES |
| NO | Is the couple able to use CycleBeads correctly?  | YES |

**If the answer to one of these questions is NO, the SDM may not continue to work well for the woman and her partner**

**If the answer to all of these questions is YES, the SDM should continue to work for the woman and her partner**

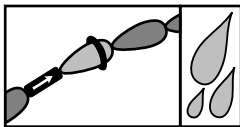




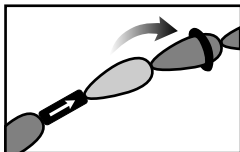
### GENERAL INFORMATION

- CycleBeads are based on a natural family planning method called the Standard Days Method™ (SDM). This method is more than 95% effective when used correctly.
- CycleBeads help a woman know on which days she can get pregnant. Using CycleBeads she keeps track of her menstrual cycle days and knows when to avoid unprotected intercourse in order to prevent a pregnancy.
- CycleBeads represent the menstrual cycle. The woman's menstrual cycle begins on the first day of her period (menstrual bleeding) and ends the day before her next period starts. Each bead is a day of the cycle. The RED bead marks the first day of her period. The WHITE beads represent days when a woman CAN GET PREGNANT. The BROWN beads represent days when pregnancy is very unlikely.
- A woman can use this method if her cycles are between 26 and 32 days long. To use it effectively, the couple needs to avoid unprotected intercourse on days when the woman can get pregnant.

### INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE

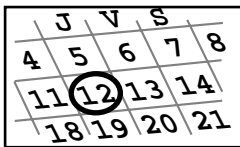


On the first day of your period, move the black ring to the RED bead. Also mark that day on your calendar.

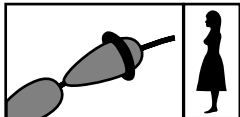


Every morning move the ring to the next bead. Always move the ring in the direction of the arrow, from narrow to wide end.

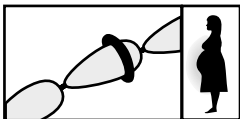
Move the ring even on days when you have your period.



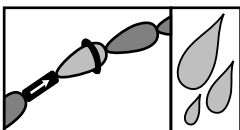
If you forget whether you moved the ring, check in your calendar when your period began. Count the days since your period began and move the ring the same number of beads starting with the RED bead.



When the ring is on a BROWN bead you can have unprotected intercourse. These are days when pregnancy is very unlikely.



When the ring is on a WHITE bead day, avoid unprotected intercourse. These are days when you can get pregnant if you have unprotected intercourse.



The day your next period starts, move the ring to the RED bead again. Skip over any remaining beads. Your period signals that a new cycle has started.



Contact your provider if you start your period before you put the ring on the DARK BROWN bead. Also contact your provider if you have not started your period by the day after you put the ring on the last BROWN bead.

Also contact your provider if:

- you have any vaginal bleeding between your periods
- you think you may have a sexually transmitted disease
- you have unprotected intercourse on a WHITE bead day



# Provider Calendar 2004

## January

| S  | M  | T  | W  | T  | F  | S  |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
|    |    |    |    | 1  | 2  | 3  |
| 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 |
| 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 |
|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |

## February

| S  | M  | T  | W  | T  | F  | S  |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  |
| 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |
| 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 |
| 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| 29 |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |

## March

| S  | M  | T  | W  | T  | F  | S  |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
|    | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  |
| 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
| 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 |    |    |    |
|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |

## April

| S  | M  | T  | W  | T  | F  | S  |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
|    |    |    |    | 1  | 2  | 3  |
| 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 |
| 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |    |
|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |

## May

| S  | M  | T  | W  | T  | F  | S  |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
|    |    |    |    |    |    | 1  |
| 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  |
| 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 |
| 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 |
| 30 | 31 |    |    |    |    |    |

## June

| S  | M  | T  | W  | T  | F  | S  |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
|    |    | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  |
| 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 |
| 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |    |    |    |
|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |

## July

| S  | M  | T  | W  | T  | F  | S  |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
|    |    |    |    | 1  | 2  | 3  |
| 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 |
| 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 |
|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |

## August

| S  | M  | T  | W  | T  | F  | S  |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  |
| 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |
| 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 |
| 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| 29 | 30 | 31 |    |    |    |    |
|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |

## September

| S  | M  | T  | W  | T  | F  | S  |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
|    |    |    | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  |
| 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 |
| 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
| 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 |
| 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |    |    |
|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |

## October

| S  | M  | T  | W  | T  | F  | S  |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
|    |    |    |    |    | 1  | 2  |
| 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  |
| 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |
| 31 |    |    |    |    |    |    |

## November

| S  | M  | T  | W  | T  | F  | S  |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
|    | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  |
| 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
| 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| 28 | 29 | 30 |    |    |    |    |
|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |

## December

| S  | M  | T  | W  | T  | F  | S  |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
|    |    |    | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  |
| 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 |
| 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
| 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 |
| 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 |    |
|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |

### Instructions to calculate cycle length

- 1) Mark the first day of the woman's most recent menstrual period.
- 2) Then mark the day she expects her next menstrual period.
- 3) Count the number of days starting with the first day of her most recent period up to the day before she expects her next period.

A woman's menstrual cycle begins the first day of her period and ends the day before her next period starts.