

# Game A: Menstrual Cycle Game



## Purpose:

To understand the menstrual cycle and fertility during the typical woman's cycle, and clarify misconceptions about menstruation and fertility.

## Materials:

 Menstrual Cycle set of cards

- Secretions cards (12 cards) – Purple 
- Period cards (5 cards) – Purple 
- Cycle days (number 1-32) – Purple 
- Sperm (card #41) – Light Blue 
- Ovum (card #42) – Light Blue 

## Take Away Messages:

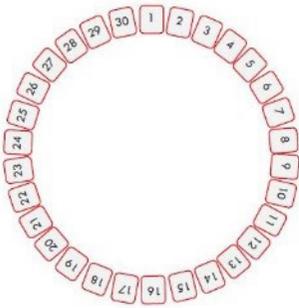
- All women of childbearing age experience a menstrual cycle, made up of bleeding days or menstruation, fertile days, and other, non-fertile days.
  - Different women experience different cycle lengths, but variation is normal.
  - Monthly bleeding, or menstruation, is normal, and makes it possible for women to get pregnant.
- If a woman has sexual relations during the fertile days of her cycle without using some method of family planning, she is at risk for getting pregnant.

## Introduction:

We are going to play the menstrual cycle game. In this game, we will learn about when women are fertile or not during their cycle and how this can influence choices around having sexual relations or using family planning. We will also learn that a woman's monthly bleeding is normal and not unclean.

## How to Play:

Spread out the number cards 1-32 on the ground in a large circle and have participants stand outside of the circle.



1. **Ask:** What can anyone tell me about what is menstruation, or a monthly menstrual cycle?
2. **Tell:** All of these cards represent the woman's menstrual cycle and each card is a day of the cycle. It is called a cycle because it happens over and over again. While the number of days will vary between women, for now we are using 32 days.

Next, place the red drop cards next to the cards numbered 1-5.



**Tell:** The red drops represent menstruation (or monthly bleeding). Women usually have monthly bleeding for 3 – 7 days. Every woman is different and that is normal.

**Ask:** "Why do women bleed every month?"

**Tell:** "Every month, a woman's womb prepares to receive a fertilized egg if she becomes pregnant. If her egg is not met by the man's sperm (fertilized egg) her body gets rid of the blood from her womb. This is menstruation and it happens to women every month, from puberty to old age."

Next, place a few clear drop cards by the cards 8 to 19.



**Tell:** "These cards represent secretions. Every month, women's bodies produce clear secretions as a normal part of their cycle. When they are healthy they do not smell, itch or cause any pain. Healthy secretions are a sign that a woman may be fertile, and are most often present from Day 8-19."

# Game A: Menstrual Cycle Game



**Next - hold up the card with the egg and place it on Day 12.**

**Tell:** "Every woman's body releases one egg into her womb each month. It is not possible to know the exact day an egg comes out, but it is sometime mid-cycle"

**Next, hold up a sperm card:**

**Tell:** "Men are fertile every day since puberty and are able get a woman pregnant during the fertile period if their sperm meet an egg. This will not happen if they use FP methods, or if they have sexual relations during a time when the egg is not present."

**Next, place the sperm card on Day 13**



**Ask:** "What happens here when there is an egg and a man and woman have sexual relations such that there is also a sperm?"

**Tell:** "The answer is that if the egg and sperm meet, the egg is fertilized and it means a pregnancy."

**Next, remove the egg card from Day 12 while leaving the sperm card.**



**Tell:** "If a woman is using a hormonal method of family planning such as pills, implants, or injectable, she does not release an egg and so there is no possibility that the sperm will meet an egg"

**Explain Fertile and Unfertile Days:**

Walk to participants standing behind cards 8-19 and say that during this time when a woman has secretions and her egg is released, it is possible she can get pregnant.

Then walk to the participants standing behind cards 20-30 and say that because there is likely no egg in the womb during these days, the sperm will not meet an egg, therefore a woman is less likely to get pregnant.

**Emphasize:** Just as the length of the cycle or bleeding days can vary from one woman to the next and this is normal, the number of days which may be fertile or infertile also vary. Therefore, you cannot predict your fertile or infertile days without more information about the consistency of your own menstrual cycle.

**Next, tell participants to walk in a circle around the cards while clapping or singing. While they are circling, put the sperm on different card numbers.**

**Put** the sperm on card 22. Ask again if the woman can get pregnant on this day. The answer is **NO** because there is no egg.

**Put** the sperm on day 15. Ask again if the woman can get pregnant on this day. The answer is **YES** because she has secretions that tell she is fertile. Also show the egg card on day 12 say that this is around the time an egg comes out.

**Ask:** What are options for avoiding pregnancy on the 15th day of her cycle?

**Answer:** She can avoid having sexual relations or use a condom (so there is no sperm) or she can use family planning (so there is no egg)

**Repeat** as many times as necessary to be sure the participants understand when there are fertile days during their cycle.

### **Discuss:**

- ? What information about the menstrual cycle was new to you?
- ? What difference might it make in your life to know this?

- What is one thing you learned today that you would share with a friend or family member?
- **Please talk with your health provider if you have questions or are interested in family planning.**