

sextalk.

answers to your questions about sex and relationships

factoid Plan B emergency contraception is 75% effective in preventing pregnancy up to 5 days after unprotected intercourse. Call Campus Health at 621-9202.

Q. Can you get pregnant from pre-ejaculation?
When during the menstrual cycle are you most likely to get pregnant?

A. Yes, you can get pregnant from the pre-ejaculation (pre-cum). When a guy becomes aroused, the fluid that appears on the tip of the penis can contain sperm. While the pre-ejaculatory fluid doesn't have as high of a concentration of sperm as semen, pre-cum may have enough of the little swimmers to make their way up the uterus and into the fallopian tubes to find an egg to impregnate.

This question often arises when a guy penetrates a woman, but pulls out before he ejaculates inside her. Some people use this method (called withdrawal) as a form of birth control. The effectiveness rates for preventing pregnancy are about 81% for typical people using withdrawal. That's a low "B". While you might be content with that grade in your English class, it's not a very good grade as far as contraception methods go. Of course, it is better than nothing.

As to your second question, the answer isn't so easy. In a "classic" menstrual cycle, ovulation occurs on Day 14 (Day 1 is when bleeding begins). The few days preceding and following ovulation are the most fertile time. The challenge is that many women don't ovulate or menstruate on a regular schedule. Some women might ovulate on Day 12 or Day 19 (not 14). And it can vary from month to month due to hormonal fluctuations, stress, etc. In addition, sperm can live for 3-5 days, making conception possible if you have sex several days before ovulation.

Since pre-ejaculatory fluid can cause pregnancy, and few women have regular cycles, it is important to use protection each and every time you have intercourse if you want to avoid pregnancy.

Have a question? Send it to sextalk@email.arizona.edu

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