

CycleBeads: Introducing a *Natural* Method of Contraception



Health Quarters is thrilled to add CycleBeads, a new all-natural method to our already extensive array of birth control options. (Currently they are available at our Beverly and Lawrence health centers.) Most contraception methods - such as the Pill, the Ring or Implanon - contain hormones. They are highly effective options and an excellent fit for many women, but they are not for everyone. CycleBeads provide an alternative for those who prefer not to use a hormonal

or barrier method of birth control.

What are CycleBeads?

CycleBeads help women monitor their fertility by representing a woman's menstrual cycle. They are a string of 32 brown, white and red beads with a black ring that moves over the beads. Every bead represents a day in the cycle. To use this method the woman moves the black ring to the red bead on the first day of her period. And then, each day, she moves the ring to the next bead. When the ring reaches the white beads, this is the beginning of the days during which she is most likely to become pregnant. A woman not wanting to become pregnant should not have unprotected sex during this time. When the ring reaches the brown beads, she can have sex and will not be likely to become pregnant. The cycle starts all over again when the woman starts her next period.

CycleBeads are based on the Standard Days Method, a natural method of family planning with no side effects that is 88% effective, up to 95% effective with perfect use.

Who can use CycleBeads?

Although hormonal methods are highly effective, some women find that they do not like the side effects, and would prefer a non-hormonal option. Due to a variety of religious and cultural beliefs, some couples do not feel comfortable using hormonal or barrier methods. CycleBeads would be an option in either of these circumstances, as well as others.

In order to use CycleBeads properly, a woman considering this method needs to be sure her partner will agree not to have sex – or to use a barrier method such as condoms – when the ring is on the white beads and she is most likely to become pregnant. If her partner is not willing to participate in this way, or if she is unable to avoid unprotected sex during this period, then CycleBeads are not a good option for her.

Also, women who are not able to monitor their cycle days, identify the fertile and infertile days, and estimate their regular cycle length (26-32 days), are not good candidates for CycleBeads. CycleBeads may be used by women whose natural menstrual periods last between 26 and 32 days. If more than once a year a woman's period is shorter than 26 days or longer than 32 days, CycleBeads will not work for her and she should consider another contraceptive option.

It's also important to remember that CycleBeads only prevent against pregnancy - they provide no protection from HIV or other STDs.

To get more information or to get started with CycleBeads, contact HQ in Beverly at 978.922.4490 or in Lawrence at 978.681.5258.

CycleBeads at a Glance

- No hormones, no side effects
- Affordable, no monthly costs
- 88% - 95% effective if used correctly
- No protection against HIV/STDs