



## If Family Planning Ain't Broke, Don't Fix it

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*Standard Days Method family planning system has a loyal following*

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Remember the days when many companies weren't willing to employ married women because of the assumption they would just get pregnant?

Currently, women can seemingly have it all as long as some family planning is in place to accommodate both career and family dreams. A new study finds that women who follow the Standard Days Method for family planning are likely to continue the method because of its effectiveness.

Dr. Shahryar Kavoussi, M.D., M.P.H., F.A.C.O.G., board certified in Reproductive Endocrinology & Infertility, tells dailyRx, "For women who have regular, monthly menstrual cycles, this method provides a reasonable way to target or avoid the days that are considered the "fertile window", depending on whether the couple is trying to conceive or wanting to avoid this window for family planning."

Dr. Kavoussi goes on to explain, "This window is based on the probability of conception with a single act of intercourse and takes into account the viability of oocytes and sperm. Specifically, it is during this fertile window that an egg ovulates from the ovary and can be picked up by and enter the fallopian tube. After this, the egg can be fertilized in the fallopian tube and develop into an embryo that can then enter the uterine cavity and implant into the uterine wall."

Institute for Reproductive Health Director Victoria Jennings, Ph.D., professor of obstetrics and gynecology at Georgetown University Medical Center reports that some women desire a way to plan their family that doesn't necessarily involve medications or implantable devices.

Some women make this decision to use Standard Days Method because of personal preferences while others do it because of unpleasant side effects from birth control pills. Many others may want to try natural family planning because of cultural or religious reasons.

James N. Gribble, Sc.D. of the Population Reference Bureau and senior author of the paper, reports that most of the 2011 study participants already had at least one child prior to initiating the Standard Days Method, Gribble reports. Even in this set of fertile women, very few had an unplanned pregnancy over the study period of three years.

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The study finds that of the over 1,600 women who had used the Standard Days Method, most continued its use over an additional two year period. Most women in the study had never used birth control prior to this. The method uses a daily bead count to monitor the menstrual cycle.

During the 12 days that occur during a woman's most fertile time in her cycle, glow in the dark beads appear to remind a woman she is more likely to conceive during the "glowing time." Once she ovulates, the egg can be fertilized within 24 hours. Sperm typically stay viable to fertilize up to five days.

The Standards Days Method was established as an effective short-term (one year) family planning method in a study published in 2002, in which Jennings was the study leader. In the 2002 study, the method was found to have been more than 95 percent effective in pregnancy prevention.

### **Contributing Expert**



Dr. Shahryar Kavoussi grew up in the Austin area and has returned to practice here after having completed his residency training at The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio and a 3 year fellowship in Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.

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