

Understanding Fertility

Fallopian tubes

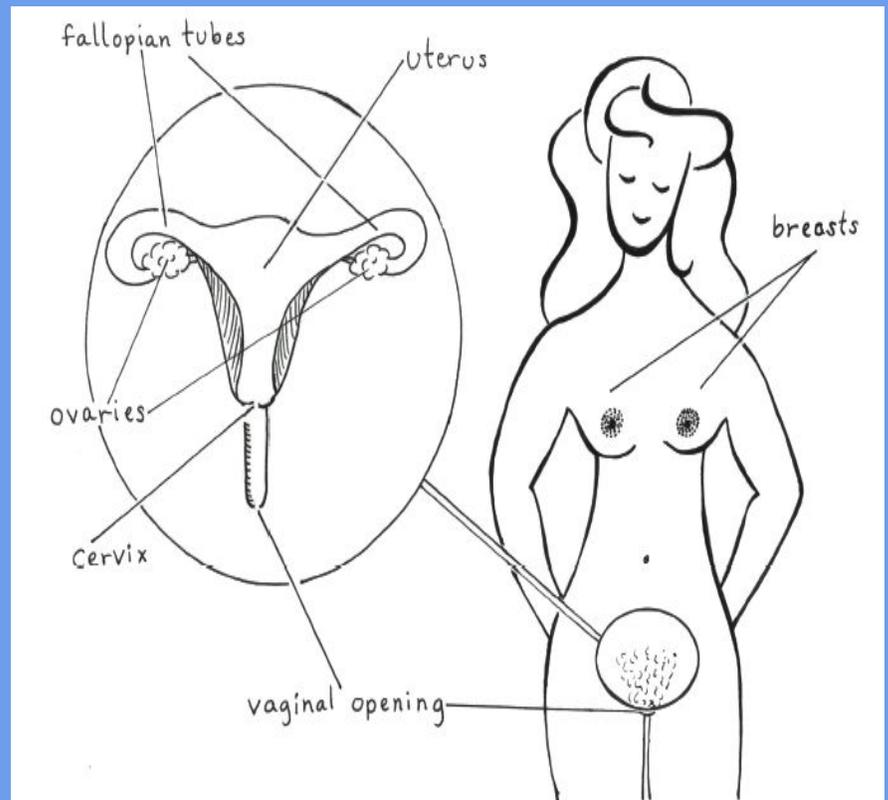
Uterus

Ovaries

Cervix

Vaginal opening

Breasts

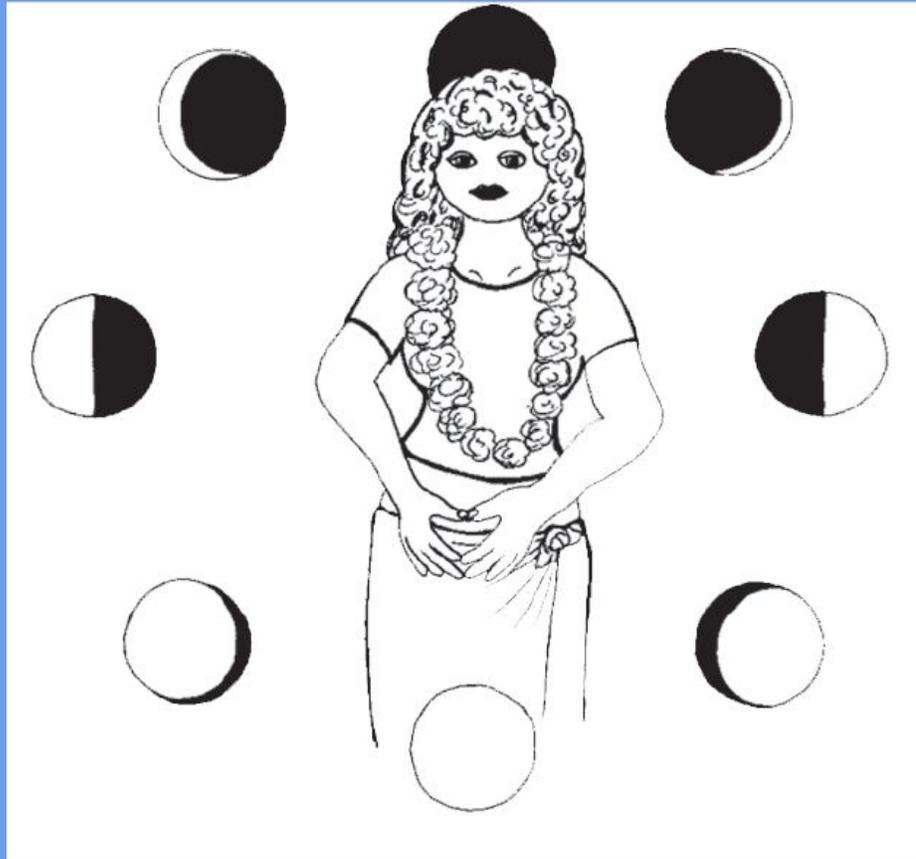


Put hand on lower abdomen like the picture.

Your little fingers will be over your ovaries.

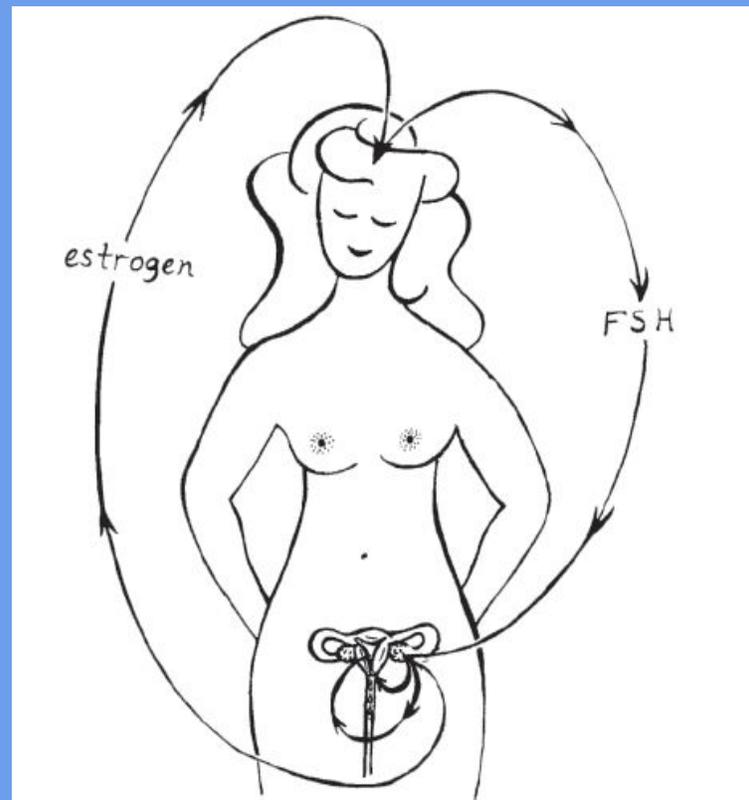
Your index fingers will be at top of uterus.

The opening of the uterus, the cervix, is deep in our bodies, opening into the vagina.



The brain produces the hormone follicle stimulating hormone, (FSH)

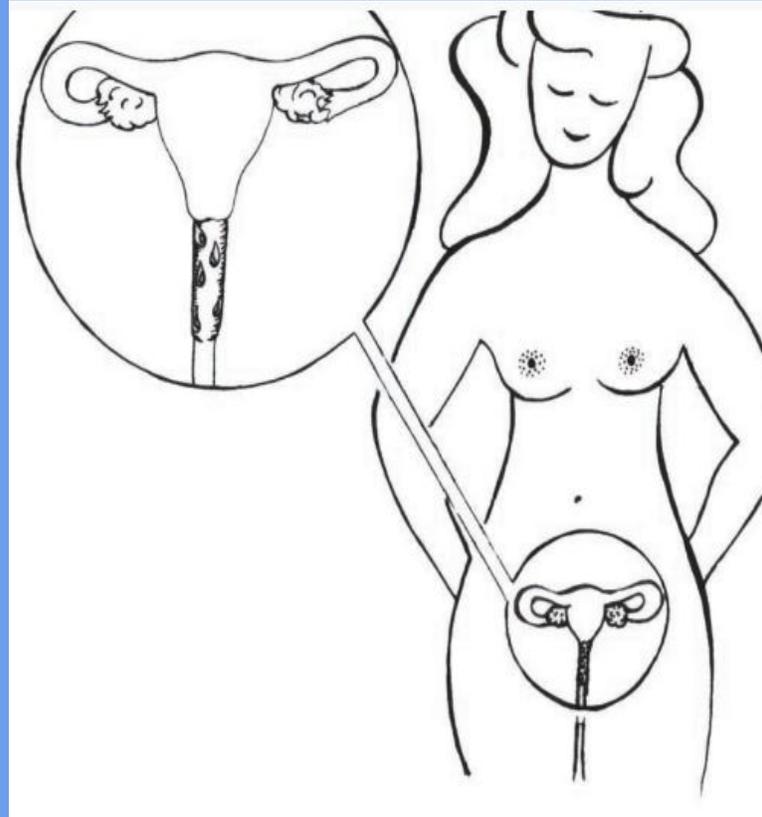
FSH Travels through bloodstream to the ovaries, causing a few of the follicles to begin ripening, or maturing. (Each follicle is a tiny ring of cells with a tiny ovum, or egg, inside.)



While the follicles ripen they produce the hormone, estrogen.

Estrogen causes the cervix to begin making mucus. We notice wetness or slippery feeling outside the vagina.

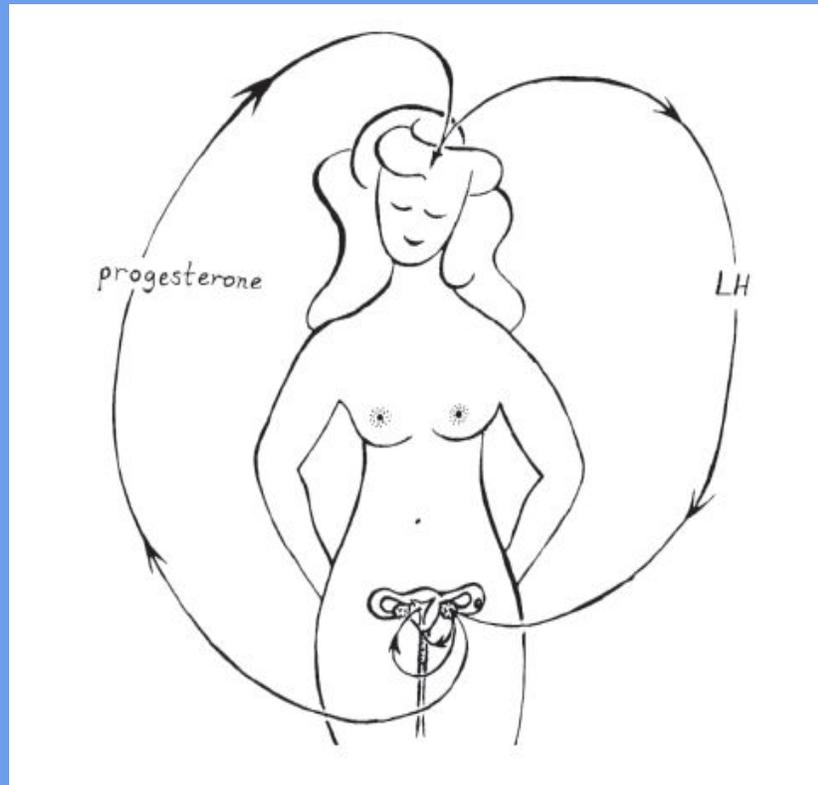
Estrogen also causes the endometrium, the lining of the uterus, to grow soft and spongy, forming a kind of bed that can hold and nourish a baby.



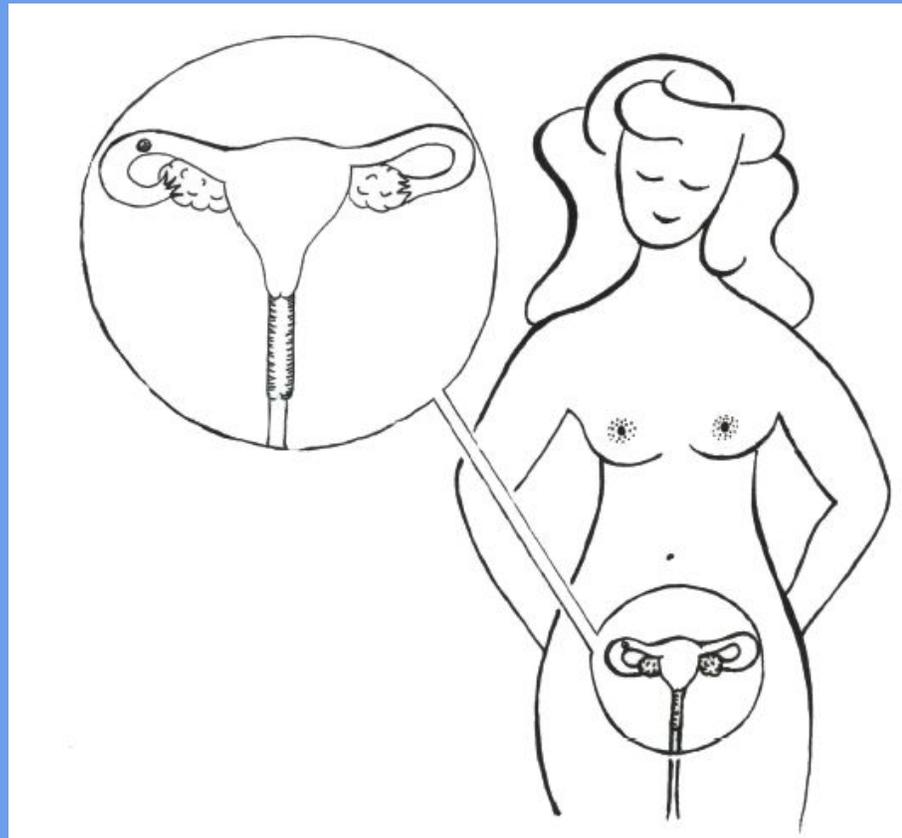
During this time we may feel outward and creative. This is a great time to start new projects and finish old ones.



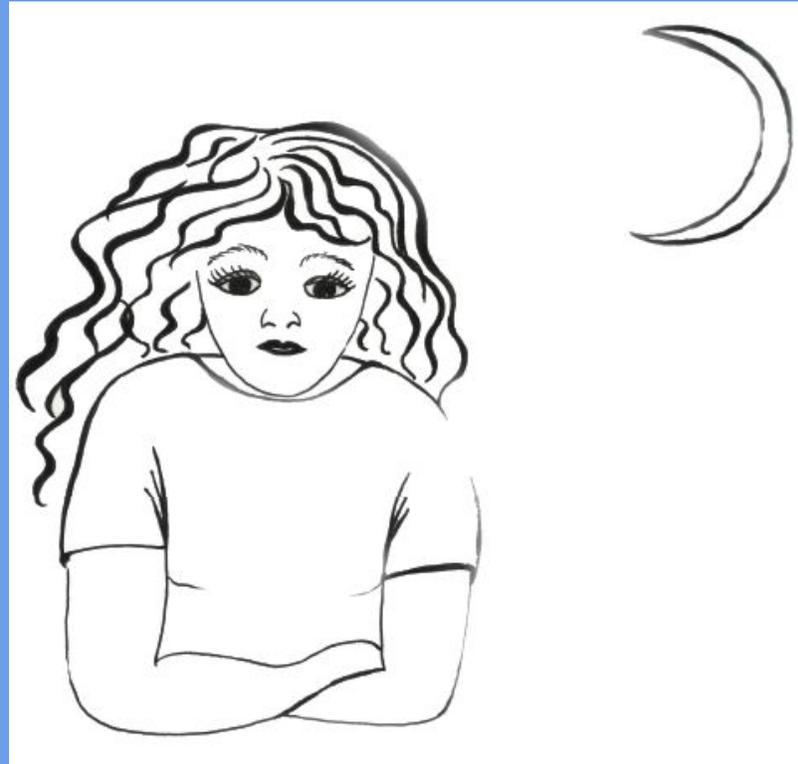
Estrogen goes via the bloodstream to the brain, signaling it to produce Luteinizing hormone (LH). LH goes to the ovaries, signaling the release of an ovum (sometimes two).



After ovulation the empty follicle produces the hormone progesterone. Progesterone thickens the mucus produced by the cervix, forming a plug to protect a baby, in case we should conceive.

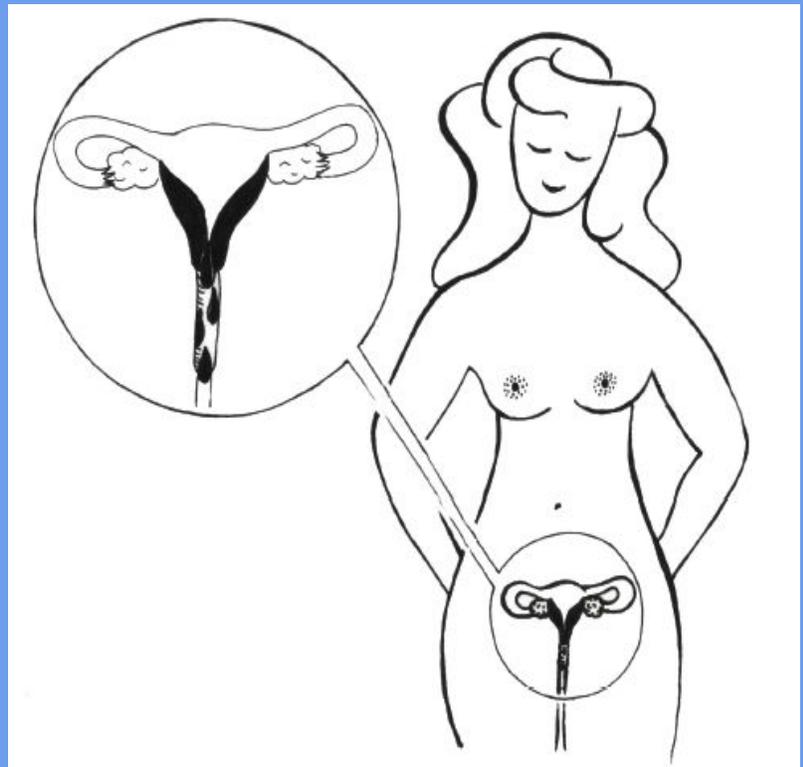


Progesterone also maintains the lining of the uterus, but can cause us to feel somewhat deflated compared to our wet time.

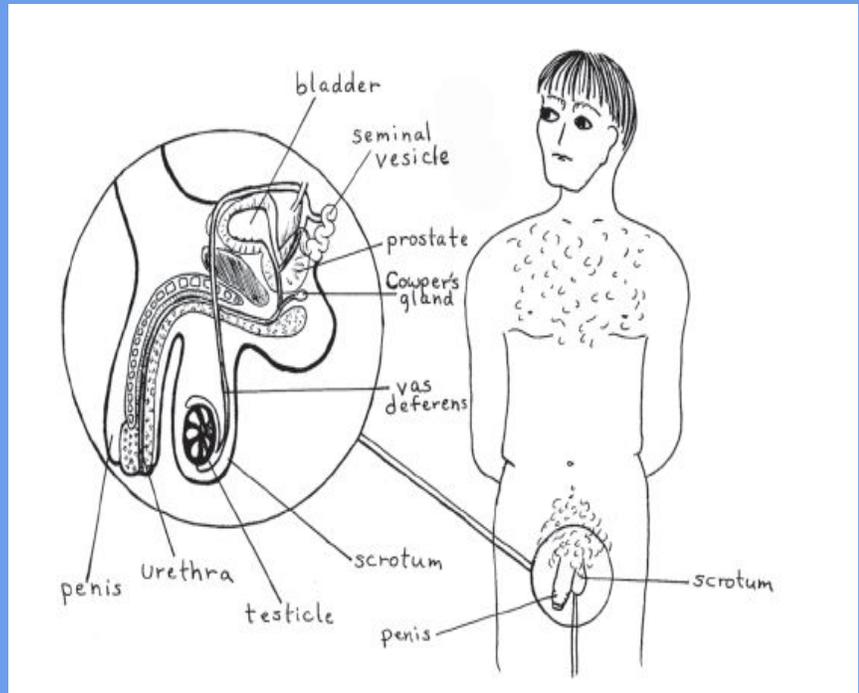


Once the follicle dies, If we do not conceive during this cycle, the lining of the uterus, (the endometrium) is shed with menstruation.

A new cycle begins after, or even during, menstruation.

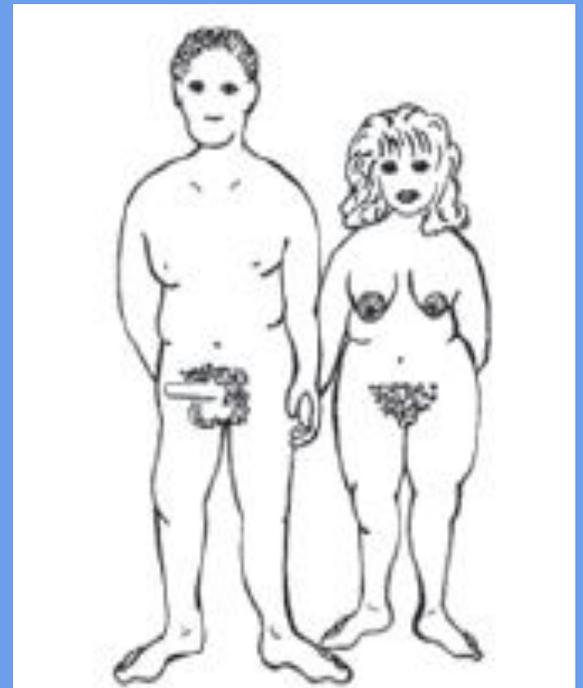


Sperm are produced in the man's testicles and swim along the vas deferens to the seminal vesicles. Seminal fluid is produced by the prostate gland. Sperm mixed with seminal fluid is called semen, and is stored in the prostate.



The penis becomes firm and erect (the male erection) during sexual arousal because of an increase of blood flow to the penis.

When the prostate becomes very full and contracts. Semen is pushed out the head of the penis. (ejaculation).



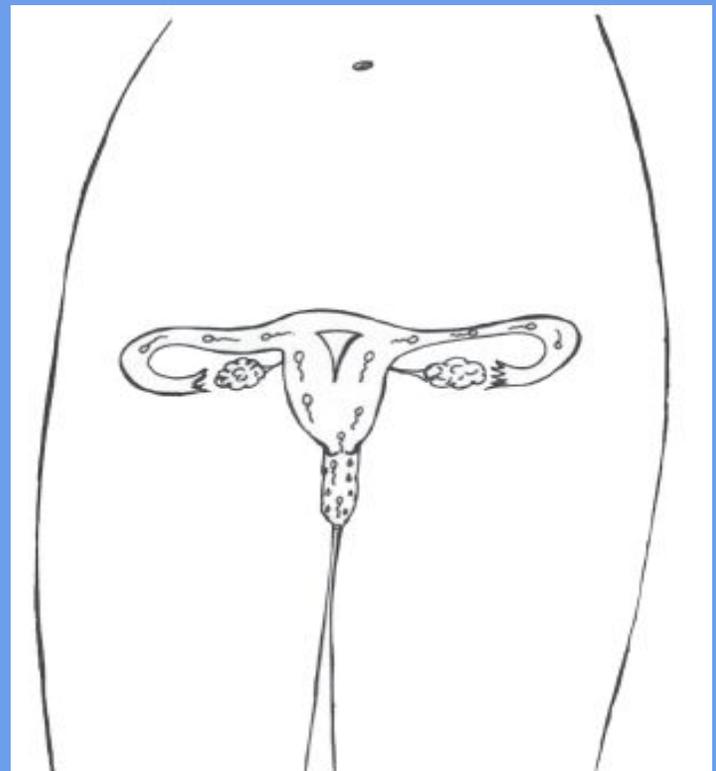
The male erection allows the penis to pass into the vagina, and for ejaculation to take place inside the vagina.

During sexual activity a valve closes between the prostate gland and the bladder to prevent urination.



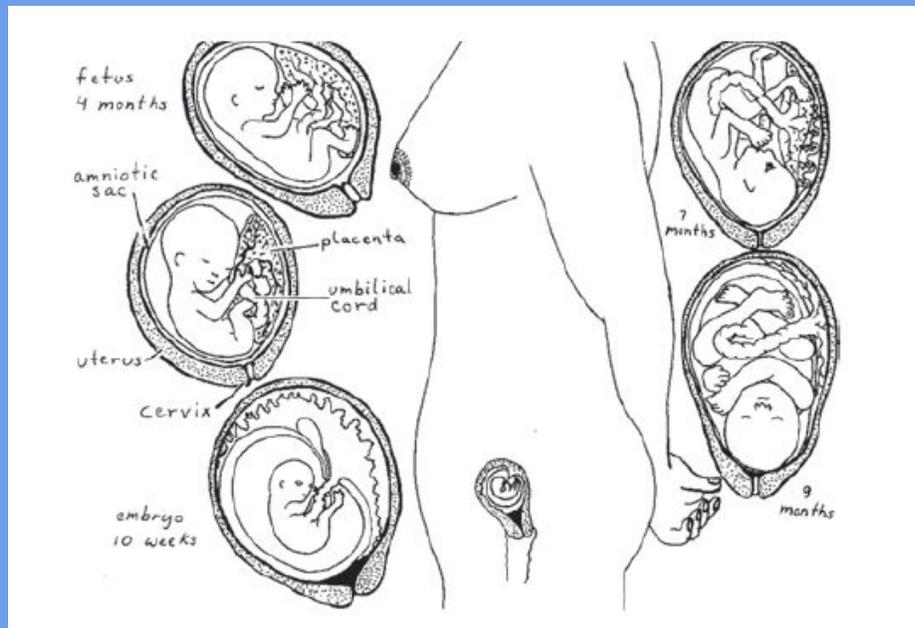
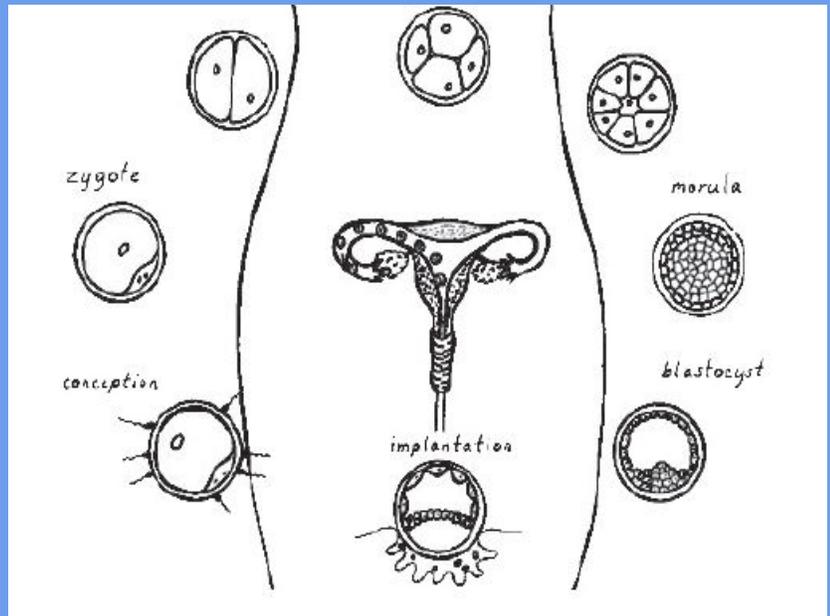
The microscopic sperm swim into the cervix and into the fallopian tubes.

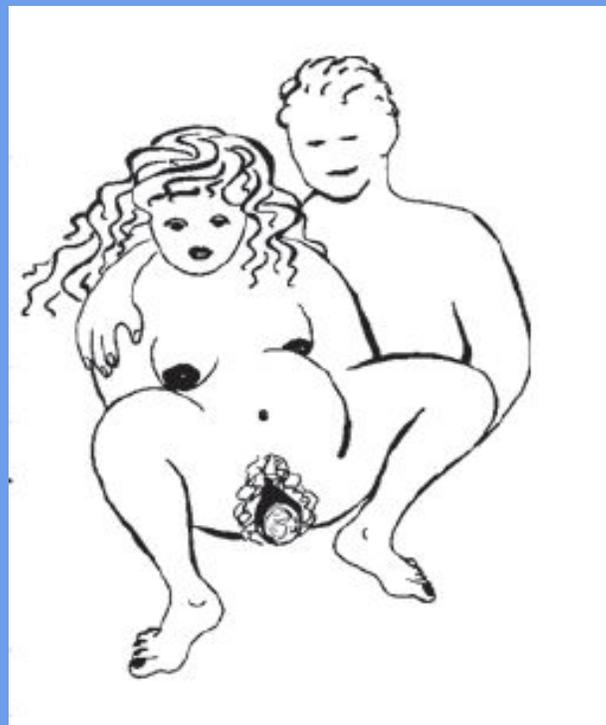
The sperm do not know which tube contains the ovum, and so they swim both ways.



The sperm may find the ovum in the fallopian tube - fertilization. The fertilized ovum now contains the genetic heritage of both parents.

It immediately begins to divide and develop.





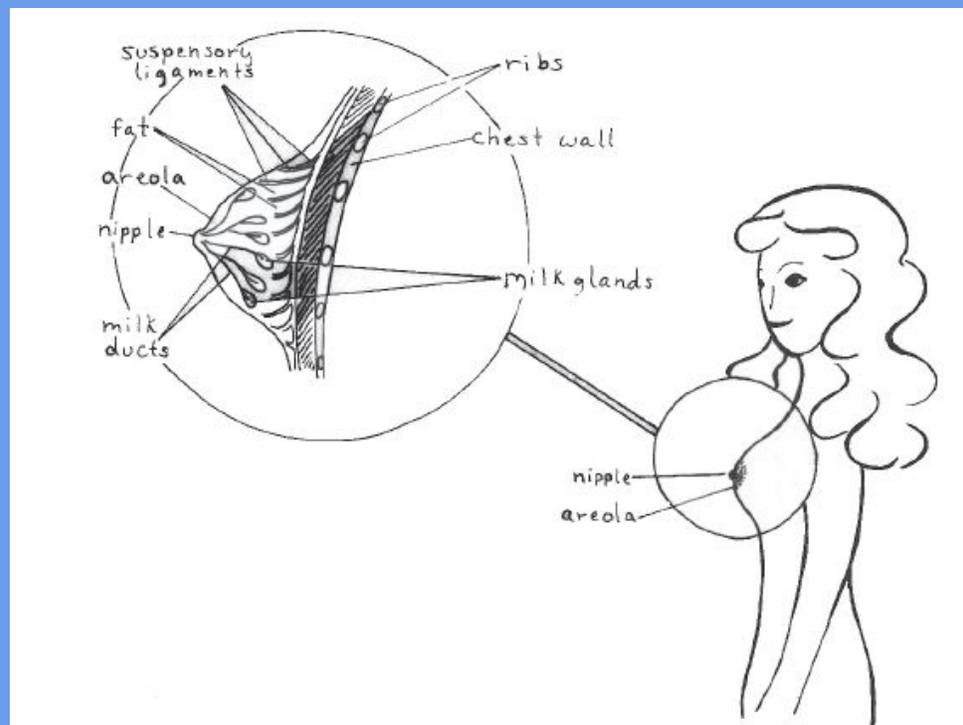
Breastfeeding is the best thing for the health and intelligence of the baby. Breastfeeding also contracts the mother's uterus and helps it to return to its pre-pregnancy size.



Each breast contains 15 - 20 milk glands. Each milk gland is drained by an opening on the nipple.

Droplets of milk pass through the small ducts and are stored in reservoirs just behind the nipple.

The baby's sucking causes more milk to let down from the milk glands toward the nipple.



Questions?

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