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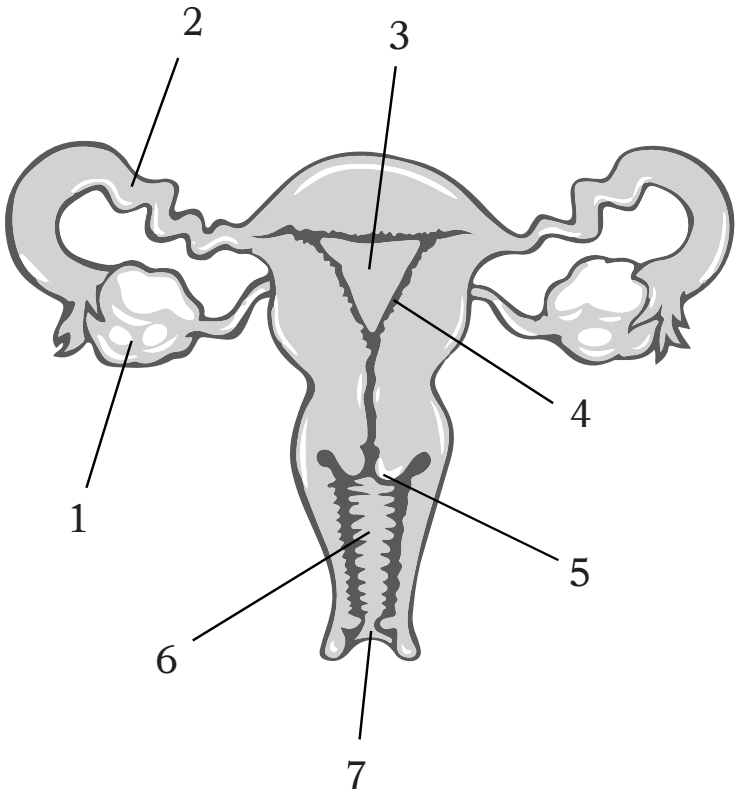
FEMALE
REPRODUCTIVE
ANATOMY &
PHYSIOLOGY

CRASH
COURSE

For anyone who needs it*

*(If you're voting on the reproductive rights of
women, you should know these things)

The Internal Female Reproductive System



This is a front-facing diagram of the internal female reproductive system, located below the intestines and behind the bladder.

1: Ovary

The ovaries are small, oval-shaped glands located on either side of the uterus. They produce and store the eggs (also called ovum) and make hormones that control the menstrual cycle and pregnancy.

2: Fallopian Tube

The fallopian tubes are a pair of hollow, muscular ducts located between the ovaries and uterus. Each fallopian tube is a channel between the ovaries, where the body makes eggs, and the uterus, where a fertilized egg can develop into a fetus. Fertilization occurs in the fallopian tubes, making it a key part of reproductive anatomy that affects fertility.

3: Uterus

The uterus is a pear-shaped organ that is hollow, muscular, and sits between the rectum and bladder in the pelvis. It is where a fertilized egg implants during pregnancy and where the fetus develops until birth.

4: Uterine Lining

During the menstrual cycle, the uterine lining (called the endometrial lining) gets thicker and rich with blood near ovulation (releasing an egg from the ovaries). If an egg is fertilized during that cycle, it implants into the lining of the uterus, and pregnancy begins. If pregnancy doesn't happen, the endometrial lining sheds (this is a "period").

5: Cervix

The cervix is a small canal that connects the uterus and vagina. It allows fluids to leave and enter the uterus.

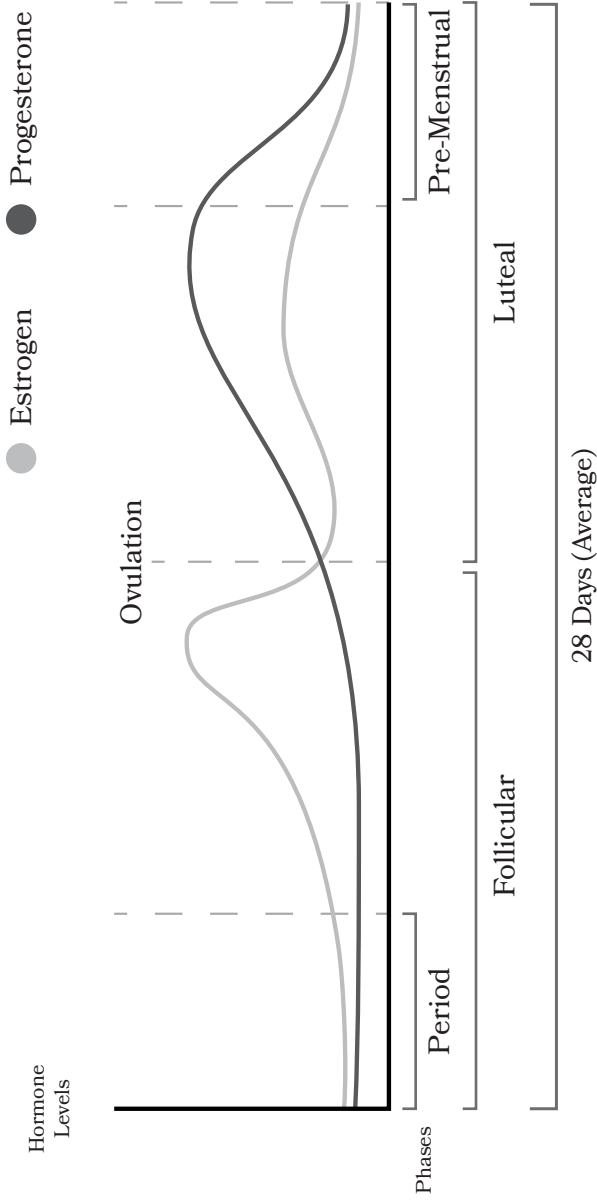
6: Vagina (Vaginal Canal)

The vagina is a stretchy, muscular canal that extends from the cervix to a hole outside of your body, called your vaginal opening.

7: Vaginal Opening

The vaginal opening connects the internal reproductive system to the external reproductive system called the vulva.

The Menstrual Cycle



The Menstrual Phases

1: Period

When a person has a period, the uterine lining sheds and flows out of the vagina. A period contains blood, mucus, and some cells from the lining of the uterus. The average length of a period is 3 to 7 days.

Symptoms:

- Cramps
- Breast tenderness
- Irritability
- Fatigue

2: Follicular Phase

The follicular phase starts on the first day of the period and lasts for 13 to 14 days. Changing hormone levels cause the lining of the uterus to thicken and follicles to grow on the surface of the ovaries. Usually only one follicle will mature into an egg.

Symptoms:

- Cheerful
- Increased energy

*after period

3: Ovulation

Ovulation is when a mature egg is released from an ovary. This usually happens once a month, about 2 weeks before your next period. You're most likely to get pregnant if you have unprotected sex around the time of ovulation.

Symptoms:

- Increased sex drive
- Breast tenderness
- Bloating

4: Luteal Phase

After ovulation, the egg travels through the fallopian tubes to the uterus. The uterus lining continues to thicken in preparation for pregnancy.

Symptoms:

- Irritability
- Anxiety
- Bloating
- Acne

... and repeat!

Fun Fact:

While females' hormones are on a 28-day cycle (like the moon's phases), males' are on a 24-hour cycle (like the sun).

Source: betterhealth.vic.gov

Pregnancy Timeline

This section is important because many states are putting abortion bans at specific dates in the pregnancy timeline, it's important to understand what this timeline is like for the pregnant person and the developing cells/egg/fetus.

Week 1-2

These are the first 2 weeks of the menstrual cycle. About 2 weeks after the period, the egg that's most mature is released from the ovary — this is called ovulation. Fertilization (the egg combining with sperm) is most likely to occur when you have unprotected vaginal sex during the 6 days leading up to — and including the day of — ovulation.

Week 3-4

The fertilized egg moves down the fallopian tube and divides into more and more cells. It reaches the uterus about 3–4 days after fertilization. The dividing cells then form a ball that floats around in the uterus for about 2–3 days. Pregnancy begins when the ball of cells attaches to the lining of the uterus. This is called implantation. It usually starts about 6 days after fertilization and takes about 3–4 days to be complete.

Month 2

The ball of cells turns into an embryo at the start of the 6th week. The embryonic stage of pregnancy lasts about 5 weeks. This is when all the major internal organs start developing. Pregnancy symptoms often become very noticeable when the person is 2 months pregnant. Common discomforts like breast tenderness, feeling very tired, peeing more often, heartburn, nausea, and vomiting usually get worse. The pregnant body produces extra blood during pregnancy, and the heart beats faster and harder than usual to carry the extra blood.

Month 3

The embryo becomes a fetus when the person is 3 months pregnant. The umbilical cord connects the fetus to the placenta and uterine wall. External sex organs also start to develop. Many of the pregnancy symptoms from the first 2 months continue — and sometimes worsen — during the third month. Most early pregnancy loss (miscarriages) happens in the first trimester. About 15% of pregnancies end in miscarriage during the first trimester.

Month 4

The 2nd trimester begins during the 4th month of pregnancy, starting on week 14. The fetus is about 3 inches (8 cm) in week 14 and 4.5 inches (12cm) by week 16. The biological sex of the fetus can sometimes be seen by looking at external sex organs on an ultrasound, hair begins to grow, the roof of the mouth is formed. Increased blood flow may lead to unpleasant pregnancy symptoms, such as bleeding gums, nosebleeds, or nasal stuffiness. The person may also feel dizzy or faint because of changes in the blood and blood vessels.

Month 5

In the 5th month of pregnancy, the fetus develops soft body hair and a greasy coating that helps protect the skin. People usually feel fetal movements for the first time during the fifth month, and pregnancy symptoms of the fourth month continue — heartburn, constipation, breast changes, dizziness, shortness of breath, nose bleeds, and gum bleeding are common.

Month 6

During the 6th month, your fetus starts to develop blood cells, taste buds, eyebrows and eyelashes, and is about 7-8 inches (18-20 cm). Pregnancy symptoms from the fourth and fifth month usually continue. Shortness of breath may improve, the breasts may start producing colostrum (early milk).

Month 7

Your 3rd trimester starts during your 7th month of pregnancy, on week 28. The fetus is 9-10 inches (23-25 cm) and continues to grow fatter. The uterus continues to expand at 7 months, back pain is common. Pregnancy symptoms from earlier months continue, but dizziness may lessen.

Month 8

The fetus is 10.5-11 inches (27-28 cm) and the lanugo (the fine, soft hair that covers your fetus's body) begins to fall off. The pregnant person may feel tired and have a more difficult time breathing as the uterus grows upward. They may get varicose veins — blue or red swollen veins most often in the legs — or hemorrhoids — varicose veins of the rectum. The pregnant person may also get stretch marks where the skin has expanded. Braxton-Hicks contractions, heartburn, and constipation may continue. The pregnant person may urinate a bit when sneezing or laughing because of pressure from the uterus on the bladder.

Month 9

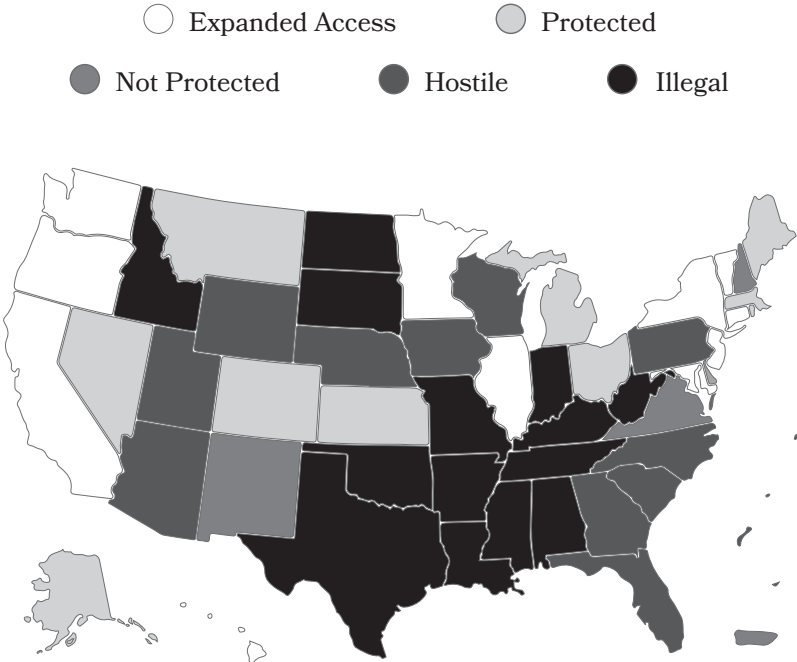
The fetus is 12-12.5 inches (30-32 cm) and the eyes have developed enough for pupils to constrict and dilate when exposed to light. Common symptoms in the ninth month include fatigue, trouble sleeping, trouble holding urine, shortness of breath, varicose veins, and stretch marks.

Month 10

By the end of the pregnancy, the uterus has expanded from the pelvis to the bottom of the rib cage. Pregnancy symptoms in the tenth month largely depend on when the fetus drops down into the lower part of your uterus. Shortness of breath, heartburn, and constipation usually improve when the fetus drops. But the position of the fetus lower in the pelvis causes frequent urination and trouble holding urine. The cervix will begin to open (dilate) to prepare for delivery. This may happen a few weeks before the birth, or it might start when the person goes into labor. They may feel sharp pains in the vagina as the cervix dilates. After they give birth, the placenta and other tissues also come out of the body. This is called the afterbirth. The average newborn baby weighs 7–8 pounds and is between 15-16 inches long.

Abortion Laws by State

Since the overturn of Roe V. Wade in June 2022.



In June 2022, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade, opening the door for states to ban abortion outright. Since the decision, 14 states have made abortion illegal.

Source: <https://reproductiverights.org/maps/abortion-laws-by-state/>

The Importance of Planned Parenthood

Planned Parenthood is a leading provider of high-quality, affordable health care for women, men, and young people, and the nation's largest provider of sex education. Planned Parenthood health centers provided millions of people in the U.S. with contraception, testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections (STIs), lifesaving cancer screenings, and safe, legal abortion. At least one in five women has relied on a Planned Parenthood health center for care in her lifetime.

For many people, Planned Parenthood is their only source of care — making their health centers an irreplaceable component of this country's health care system. And as experts in reproductive health care, Planned Parenthood health centers often provide family planning services that other safety-net providers simply do not offer.

Blocking people from accessing family planning and preventive care at Planned Parenthood health centers comes at too high a cost. Without Planned Parenthood, many people would have nowhere else to turn for care. Those who already face barriers to accessing health care — especially people of color, people with low incomes, as well as people who live in rural areas — would be impacted the most.

The public health community has been clear — community health centers (CHCs) cannot absorb Planned Parenthood's patients. Blocking patients from coming to Planned Parenthood would cause a national health care disaster, with many completely losing access to the timely health care they need.

Services Provided by Planned Parenthood

- Wellness and Preventative Care
- Vaccines
- Gender-Affirming Care
- Prenatal and Postpartum Services
- STD Testing and Treatment
- Pregnancy Planning and Testing
- Mental Health Services
- HIV Care
- Abortion
- Emergency Contraception
- Birth Control
- Sexual Education



*The Irreplaceable Role of
Planned Parenthood Health
Centers*

PDF, Planned Parenthood
Federation of America, Jan 2019.

Read it by scanning
this QR code

Want to Learn More?



Learn about Sexual Health from
Planned Parenthood's *Learn Site*

plannedparenthood.org/learn



Keep Up-to-Date on
Reproductive Rights

reproductiverights.org



Get Unbiased Voting Information and
Election Guides from the League of
Women Voters

lww.org



Get Educated and Involved
in Equal Rights Initiatives

equalrights.org

Once you have read the contents of this zine, took photos for reference, and visited the provided resources (and signed your name below!), please pass it on, leave it in a place where someone new will discover it, or give it to a friend!

Lets spread the love (& knowledge!)

Reader #1

Reader #2

Reader #3

Reader #4

Reader #5

Reader #6

☆ NOTE ☆

Everything discussed in this zine is relating to the “typical” anatomy of an assigned-female-at-birth person. Keep in mind that everyone’s body is different and there are people who’s body is not exactly like these diagrams and descriptions (ie. intersex folks, trans folks, or those with any other sort of unique anatomy, etc.).

Author: Scout Duncan

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