

A new family planning method called the Standard Days Method (SDM) is gaining popularity worldwide. This method, developed by researchers at Georgetown University's Institute of Reproductive Health (IRH), can be used by women with cycle lengths of 26-32 days and can help prevent pregnancy by educating women on how to recognize their fertile period (Day 8-Day 19) and avoid unprotected sex during this time (Gribble, 2003). This method involves using a string of colored beads to track the phases of the menstrual cycle. It lacks side effects, is simple, easy, and natural, which makes it appealing to couples who are not currently using any method, those who rely on traditional methods and those who are dissatisfied with alternate methods. In trials conducted in El Salvador and India, this method was found to be especially popular among young women who had no prior experience with other methods of contraception and had concerns about side-effects and a perceived threat to future fertility (Monroy et al., 2003)



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In a multisite efficacy trial, SDM users were found to have a first year pregnancy rate of 4.8 per 100 woman-years of correct use (95% confidence interval, 2.33-7.11) which is comparable to other user-directed methods (Arevalo et al., 2002).

Standard Days Method Information:

Institute for Reproductive Health (IRH), Georgetown University: <http://www.irh.org/>

Cyclebeads: <http://www.cyclebeads.com/>

USAID (Procurement of Cyclebeads for International Programs): <http://www.rhsupplies.org/>

- Gribble, J. N. (2003). The Standard Days Method of family planning: A response to Cairo. *Viewpoint*, 29(4), 188-191
- Monroy, M., Lundgren, R. & Montano, G. (2003). Introducing the Standard Days Method of family planning into the water and sanitation program of PCI/Procosal El Salvador, final report, San Salvador, El Salvador: Project Concern International.
- Arevalo, M., Jennings, V., & Sinai, I. (2002) Efficacy of a new method of family planning: the Standard Days Method. *Contraception*. 65, 333-338