Where married couples are trying to achieve a pregnancy or have a good reason to avoid a pregnancy, the Church teaches that understanding and practicing the principles of natural fertility is the only legitimate approach.

These approaches respect the truth and meaning of marriage, the sexual act, and the gift of fertility in God’s design. Since the sexual embrace is the physical sign of the sacrament (only after consummation is the bond indissoluble) living the sexual embrace in accordance with its truth and meaning is essential to the sacramentality of marriage.

Modern methods such as the Sympto Thermal Method, the Creighton Fertility Care model or the Neo Fertility method are very reliable when used correctly and have completely transformed the practice, making it not only the best option from a faith and spiritual perspective but also from every form of health and well-being perspective. When the methods are learnt via a trained teacher and where the rules are complied with, the efficacy rates are as high, if not higher, than artificial methods.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Failure Rate Percentages</th>
<th>Perfect Use</th>
<th>Typical Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Modern Natural Family Planning Methods</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progesterone –only/minipill</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined pills</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male Condom</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- There is no method with 0% failure rate.
- Natural Methods (NFP) 2.7% failure rate. 2% for sensips - sympto-thermal method & 7% for marquette based methods - sympto hormonal.
- The NHS website quotes 24% for NFP methods, but this combines outdated and modern NFP methods. Outdated methods do have failure rate up to 23% so the correct combined figure is 2-23%.

1 Pope St Paul VI Humanae Vitae 1968 para 16
Couples’ Views of the Effects of Natural Family Planning on Marital Dynamics Authors: Leona VandeVusse, Lisa Hanson, Richard J. Fehring, Amy Newman, Jaime Fox. https://epublications.marquette.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=&httpsredir=1&article=1008&context=nursing_fac
Natural methods have no detrimental health effects or risks as with the artificial contraceptive pill, such as a negative impact on energy levels, mental health, and well-being or any of its correlations with blood clots, weight gain, depression, breast cancer, hypothalamic amenorrhea, infertility, and autoimmune diseases. Neither is there the risk of an abortifacient effect as with the mini artificial contraceptive pill.

Natural methods inspire and foster a mindset of awe and wonder both for God as the giver of life, the beauty and wonder of the human person and the gift of sexuality and fertility in God’s design. They also enable a shared responsibility approach and thereby improve a couple’s communication, increase their mutual respect, and deepen their intimacy as research has confirmed \(^4\) (See Discussion Section of the Research Paper referenced).

Bearing in mind according to research published in 2022 only 4% of doctors and other medical practitioners have been formally trained in modern natural fertility methods and only 6% are aware of its true efficacy\(^5\) very few couples will have had their attention drawn to this option by their doctors. Equally, many will also be unaware of how the methods assist couples to achieve a pregnancy or how these methods may also serve as a tool for clinicians trained in restorative reproductive medicine to guide the work and management

**Who To Contact:**

If you would like to learn how to practice the method, please contact the Diocesan NFP Practitioner: **Pilar Cas** [pilar.cas@dioceseofshrewsbury.org](mailto:pilar.cas@dioceseofshrewsbury.org) Mobile: 07935 222918

Or for more information generally please contact **Jane Deegan** [jane.deegan@dioceseofshrewsbury.org](mailto:jane.deegan@dioceseofshrewsbury.org) Mobile: 07517 906435

For more specialist information concerning using the method to achieve pregnancy contact **Freda McMahon** [https://www.naturalfertilitymatters.com](https://www.naturalfertilitymatters.com) or make an appointment for a free telephone discussion [https://calendly.com/naturalfertilitymatters/discovery?](https://calendly.com/naturalfertilitymatters/discovery?)

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