

GLOSSARY

Cervix	Neck of the uterus which opens and shuts to control access to the uterus and keep germs out.
Conception	The start of new human life, when the egg and the sperm fuse to form a new cell with its own identity (DNA). Conception occurs towards the ovary end of the fallopian tube.
DNA	Deoxyribonucleic acid. DNA is present in the nucleus, or control centre, of each of the cells from which living beings are made. Inside the DNA, there are tiny genes which contain instructions for how cells are to grow and behave. Each person's DNA is unique, and every cell of our body is marked with that unique DNA, except for our eggs or sperm which, remarkably, each have their own DNA.
Egg	Female reproductive cell, which, if fertilized by the male sperm, can develop into new human life. Girls are born with about half a million tiny eggs already stored in their ovaries.
Embryo	Baby in the first eight or so weeks of life after conception.
Endometrium	The scientific name for the lining of the uterus, which thickens each cycle and comes away in a period.
Faeces	Waste matter from food which is expelled from the body through the anus.
Fallopian tube	Small tube which takes the egg towards sperm and sperm towards the egg. Conception, if it occurs, happens in the outer part of the tube. Without sperm, the egg dies in the tube.
Female reproductive organs	Organs inside a woman's lower tummy which, when they act in harness with a man's reproductive organs, have the potential to give life to a baby.
Fertilisation	Process by which the sperm becomes one with the egg to form a new human being. Fertilisation can take up to a day to complete.
Fimbria	Feathery 'fingers' at the end of the fallopian tube which catch the egg from the ovary and carry it into the tube. The egg has no means to move on its own.
Follicle	Protective case which grows up round the eggs as they mature. The main follicle grows faster than anything else in the body, and becomes the size of a walnut before breaking open the ovary to release the egg.
Genetic material	Collective term for the package of genes which govern the way cells behave. Genetic material is stored in DNA.