

The Blood phase refers to days 1 through 7, the time that the woman is bleeding. The uterus, lined with blood, empties itself over a period of 3 to 5 days. Blood and qi are closely related: the formation and coursing of Blood depends on the abundance of qi, whereas the formation and distribution of qi depends on Blood.⁶ Therefore, if Blood is vacuous, qi becomes vacuous and will loosen its root and course upward recklessly. If qi is weak, it will not be able to engender Blood. This may be presented in a weak, thready

pulse during the first phase of a woman's cycle.³ Estrogen levels are low during the first phase.²⁰

A woman with chronic Blood vacuity (in TCM, Blood vacuity refers to a pattern of disharmony and doesn't necessarily correlate with Western concepts of anemia) might experience dry hair and skin, pale or brittle nails, constipation, scanty or pale menstrual bleeding, a delayed period (caused by prolonged follicular phase), lethargy, palpitations, and/or insomnia.⁷

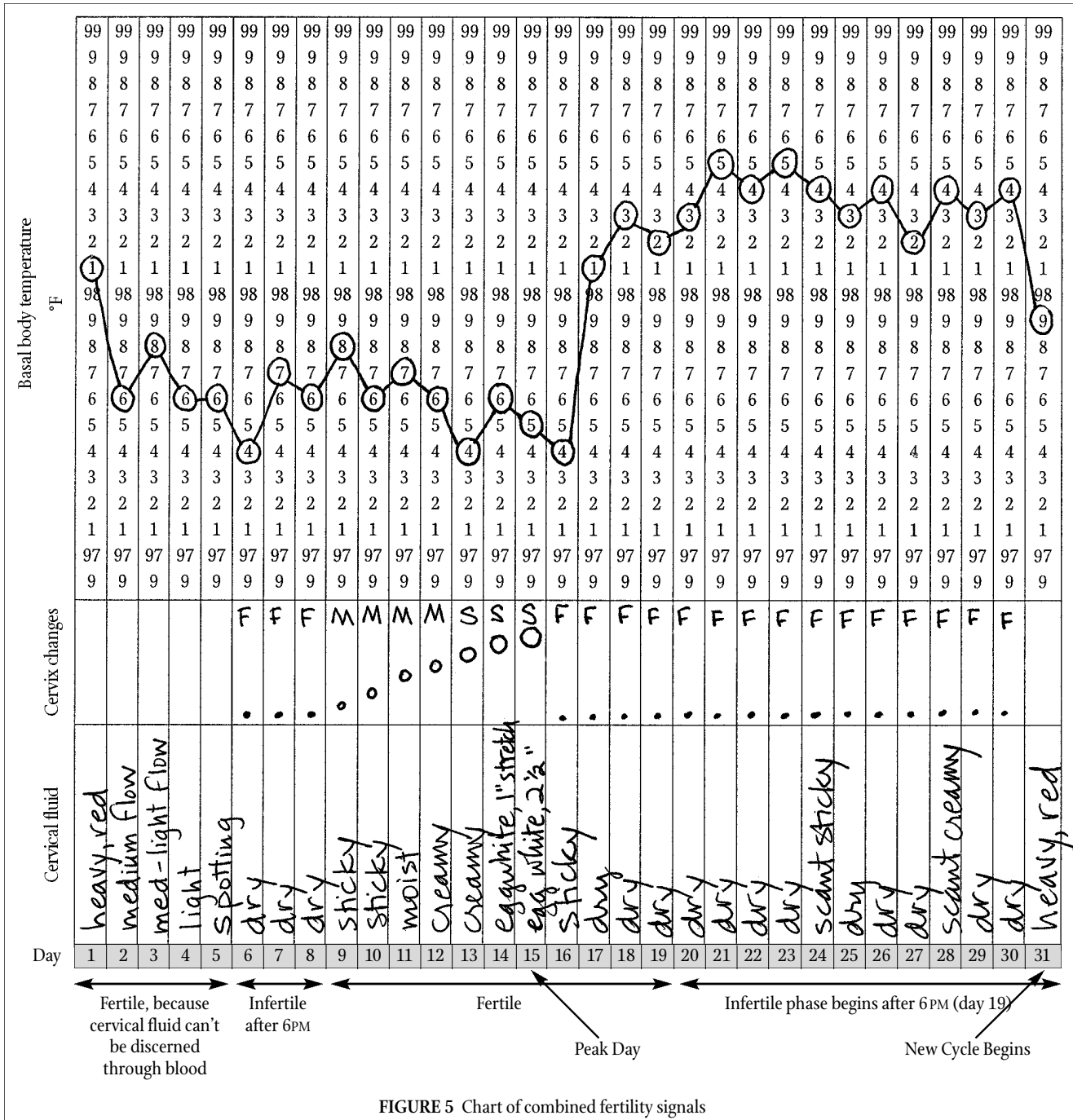


FIGURE 5 Chart of combined fertility signals