

## 4.2 Female Reproductive System

Females also have \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ sex characteristics.

Some \_\_\_\_\_ sex characteristics include the growth of underarm and pubic hair, widening of the hips, and the development of mammary glands. Note that mammary glands will only produce milk if a woman gives birth.

The female egg cell (ovum) is much \_\_\_\_\_ than the male reproductive cell. This makes sense as it contains many \_\_\_\_\_ that will be used in cell division upon fertilization.

Unlike males, females are born with \_\_\_\_\_. They may start with as many as 2 million, however by puberty the number is reduced to somewhere closer to 400,000. At maturity, females usually release \_\_\_\_\_ every month.

The primary reproductive organ in females is the \_\_\_\_\_. This is where egg cells mature and are released. There are \_\_\_\_\_ ovaries. Inside each are many \_\_\_\_\_, each one with a single immature egg. The ovaries also produce the main female sex hormones \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

The \_\_\_\_\_ cycle is the female reproductive cycle. In general, it lasts 28 days, but can vary from 20-40 days. This cycle does not go on for the life of the female. Eventually it

stops during something called \_\_\_\_\_. This usually occurs in females aged 40 to 50 years old.

Several follicles develop during each reproductive cycle,

however only a \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ reaches maturity (usually). Once the egg matures it will burst through the wall of the ovary. This process is called \_\_\_\_\_.

The empty follicle is called the \_\_\_\_\_.

It will mature and produce \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

After release, the egg is propelled by finger-like projections

into the \_\_\_\_\_ (also called \_\_\_\_\_).

This transports the egg from the ovary to the \_\_\_\_\_ (also called womb). Fertilization usually occurs in the

\_\_\_\_\_. The uterus will receive the fertilized egg. It is here where the fertilized egg will develop. The lining of the

uterus is called the \_\_\_\_\_. It provides more nutrients for the developing embryo.

The \_\_\_\_\_ is the muscular opening between the

uterus and \_\_\_\_\_. The \_\_\_\_\_ receives the male penis and sperm during sexual intercourse and it is the birth canal that the baby will come out.

After ovulation there are two possible outcomes, depending of whether or not the egg is fertilized:

\_\_\_\_\_: This occurs when the egg is not fertilized.

This process involves the \_\_\_\_\_ being shed. This is considered the first stage of the menstrual cycle and is called the \_\_\_\_\_ phase. The endometrium is so rich in \_\_\_\_\_ it looks like \_\_\_\_\_ is being released.

The second phase involves a new follicle starting to develop.

This is called the \_\_\_\_\_ phase.

The third phase is called \_\_\_\_\_ and is where the egg leaves the ovary.

The final stage is called the \_\_\_\_\_ phase. Now that an egg has been released, the follicle will develop into the

\_\_\_\_\_ . The \_\_\_\_\_ and

\_\_\_\_\_ will prepare the endometrium for nourishing a

freshly fertilized egg. \_\_\_\_\_ also prevents any new eggs from being released.

Pregnancy: more about this in the next section.