****The Female Reproductive System

All living things reproduce. Reproduction — the process by which organisms make more organisms like themselves — is one of the things that sets living things apart from nonliving matter. Both the male and female reproductive systems are essential for reproduction. The female needs a male to fertilize her egg, even though it is she who carries offspring through pregnancy and childbirth.

Unlike the male, the human female has a reproductive system located entirely in the pelvis. A female's internal reproductive organs are the vagina, uterus, fallopian tubes, and ovaries.

**THE VAGINA**

The vagina is a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, hollow tube that extends from the vaginal \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to the uterus. The vagina is about 8 to 12 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ long in a grown woman. Because it has muscular walls, it can \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. This ability to become wider or \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ allows the vagina to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ something as slim as a tampon and as wide as a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. The vagina's muscular walls are lined with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ mucous membranes, which keep it \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

The vagina serves three purposes:

1. It's where the penis is inserted during sexual \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
2. It's the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ that a baby takes out of a woman's body during \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, called the birth canal.
3. It provides the route for the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ blood (the period) to leave the body from the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**THE CERVIX**

The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ connects with the uterus at the cervix. The cervix has \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, thick walls. The opening of the cervix is very small (no wider than a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_). During childbirth, the cervix can \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to allow a baby to pass.

**THE UTERUS**

The uterus is a hollow, muscular organ in which a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ egg, called the "\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_," becomes embedded and in which the egg is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and allowed to develop until birth. It lies in the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ cavity behind the bladder and in front of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. The uterus is lined with tissues which change during the menstrual \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. The major tissues of the Uterus include the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and the Myometrium.

**Endometrium:** Lining of the uterine cavity. In all \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ mammals, including humans, the endometrium builds a lining \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ which is shed if no pregnancy occurs.

**Myometrium:** The uterus mostly consists of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ muscle, known as Myometrium. This muscle has the ability to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and exerts large amounts of force during child birth.

**FALLOPIAN TUBES**

The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ tubes connect the uterus to the ovaries. There are two fallopian tubes, each \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to a side of the uterus. The fallopian tubes are about 10 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ long and about as wide as a piece of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Within each tube is a tiny \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ no wider than a sewing needle. At the other end of each fallopian tube is a fringed area with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ called ‘fimbrae’ that look like fingers.

This fringed area wraps \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the ovary but doesn't \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ attach to it. When an egg pops out of an ovary, it enters the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ tube via the aid of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Once the egg is in the fallopian tube, tiny \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in the tube's lining help push it down the narrow \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ toward the uterus. The lining of the tube and its \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ sustain both the egg and the sperm, encouraging \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and nourishing the egg until it reaches the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**THE OVARIES**

The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ are a pair of oval or almond-shaped \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_which lie on either side of the uterus and just below the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to the fallopian tubes. In addition to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ eggs the ovaries produce female sex \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ called oestrogen and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.