

## The Internal Female Reproductive System: How Does It Work?

Two egg- shaped organs on either side of the internal female reproductive system are called the ***ovaries***. The ovary is about the size of an almond. When a woman is born, the ovaries already contain all the ova (eggs) she will ever produce. The ovaries are where all the ova (eggs) are stored.

Once a month, the ovaries release one mature egg. This process is called ovulation. When the ovary releases the egg, the egg will travel through the ***fallopian tube***. The journey of the egg through the fallopian tube takes about three days.

The fallopian tube carries the egg from the ovary to the ***uterus***. The uterus is a pear shaped organ that will stretch to hold the fetus and the placenta during pregnancy. It is very strong, muscular and stretchable.

At the bottom of the uterus, is the ***cervix***. This is slightly open in women who are not pregnant, but is closed during pregnancy to avoid infection. When the fetus is ready to be born, the cervix opens.

The opening that leads to the internal female reproductive system is the ***vagina***. The vagina is a soft and muscular elastic tube. The vagina is the birth canal for the fetus and allows menstrual flow to exit the body.