



Breastfeeding and Birth Control

Breastfeeding is the natural way to feed your baby. Babies should be exclusively breastfed to six months of age and then continue to be breastfed along with complementary feeding to two years and beyond. The longer you breastfeed, the better it is for you and your baby.

Non-Hormonal Birth Control Choices

Breastfeeding and birth control are compatible. It is best to wait at least 18 months between the birth of one child and the conception of another. There is no reason to stop breastfeeding because you want to ensure you do not get pregnant.

You and your partner have many reliable birth control choices. The following choices have no effect on breastfeeding and can generally be initiated soon after childbirth or at the postpartum check-up:

- Lactational Amenorrhea Method (LAM):

What does this mean?

L = Lactation – breastfeeding

A = Amenorrhea – no monthly period

M = Method

LAM is a very effective form of contraception if you can answer YES to ALL of the following statements:

1. My baby is less than six months old.
2. My monthly period has not returned.
3. My baby is fully or nearly fully breastfed.
4. I am breastfeeding at least every four hours during the day and at least every six hours at night.

“Fully breastfed” means your baby gets all food from suckling at the breast.

“Nearly fully breastfed” means that your baby does not receive more than one or two mouthfuls per day of anything else in addition to breastfeeding and vitamin D.

If you answer YES to all of these statements, breastfeeding is 98-99% effective in preventing pregnancy.

If you answer NO to any of the statements, the chance of pregnancy increases greatly. If you do not want to get pregnant, begin another method of contraception such as:

- Condoms and spermicides
- Copper Intrauterine Device (I.U.D.)
- Vasectomy (permanent for male)
- Tubal Ligation (permanent for female)

Hormonal Birth Control Choices

Hormone-based birth control choices can also be compatible with breastfeeding. Current research suggests that estrogens and progestins in birth control are not harmful to infants, but it is known that estrogen can reduce a woman’s milk supply. For this reason, progestin-only birth control is recommended for breastfeeding women starting six weeks after childbirth as there is a low risk of milk supply reduction.

Hormonal birth control choices include:

- Mini Pill (progestin only)
- Depo Provera (progestin only)
- Hormonal Intrauterine System (I.U.S.) (progestin only)
- Birth Control Pill (estrogen and progestin)
- Birth Control Patch (estrogen and progestin)
- Vaginal Contraceptive Ring (estrogen and progestin)

For further information, speak to your healthcare provider or dial 311