

Birth control options for the breastfeeding woman

Many women wish to consider birth control options soon after their baby is born but worry how breastfeeding will be affected. If you are breastfeeding, you should choose a birth control method that does not affect your breastmilk supply.

Can breastfeeding be a form of birth control?

YES! - LAM or The Lactational Amenorrhea Method is considered to be more than 98% effective in preventing pregnancy

For LAM to be effective, the following criteria must be met:

1. Your baby is under six months old
 2. Your menstrual period has not returned
 3. Your baby is **fully** or **nearly fully breastfed** and receives no more than one or two mouthfuls of other liquids or foods a day
- Breastfeed according to your baby's signs of hunger day and night, not according to a schedule, with no longer than 4 hours between feeds in the day and no longer than six hours between feeds at night
 - Provide your baby with breastmilk directly from the breast and avoid use of bottles or pacifiers

*Pumping and feeding your baby expressed breastmilk is **not** the same as breastfeeding and will not protect you from unplanned pregnancy.*

To prevent unplanned pregnancy, you will need to use another form of birth control when:

1. Your menstrual period returns
2. Your baby is no longer fully or nearly fully breastfed
3. Your baby is older than six months



If you do not meet LAM criteria, or if LAM is not for you, consider another form of birth control. All forms of birth control can be used while breastfeeding, but some may lower your breastmilk production.

Birth control method	Considerations and effect on breastfeeding
Condoms (male or female)	No effect on breastfeeding
Diaphragm and Cervical Cap (used with spermicide)	No effect on breastfeeding Use should be avoided until six weeks postpartum Needs to be fitted by a healthcare professional
Emergency Contraceptive Pill (ECP)	No effect on breastfeeding
Natural Family Planning Methods	No effect on breastfeeding May be difficult to use methods during the first six months postpartum
Spermicide (foam, film)	No effect on breastfeeding
Sponge (contains spermicide)	No effect on breastfeeding Delay use until six weeks postpartum Should not be used when there is vaginal bleeding
Tubal Ligation/Vasectomy (Female/male sterilization)	No effect on breastfeeding Permanent method of birth control
Withdrawal	No effect on breastfeeding
IUD non-hormonal	No effect on breastfeeding May be inserted at delivery, within one week of delivery, or after six weeks postpartum
IUD progestin hormone releasing (Mirena)	Insertion should be delayed until at least six weeks postpartum and once milk supply is well established
Mini Pill/Progestin-only Pill	Use should be delayed until at least six weeks postpartum and once milk supply is well established
Injectable/Depo-Provera	Use should be delayed until at least six weeks postpartum and once milk supply is well established Depo-Provera may take several months to clear from your body
Combined Hormonal Birth Control Pill	May decrease your milk supply Should be delayed until at least six months postpartum Consider using an alternate method while breastfeeding
Contraceptive Patch/Evra Patch	May decrease your milk supply Should be delayed until at least six months postpartum Consider using an alternate method while breastfeeding
Vaginal Contraceptive Ring/Nuva Ring	May decrease your milk supply Should be delayed until at least six months postpartum Consider using an alternate method while breastfeeding