

# Birth Control After Having a Baby

Before you leave the hospital, it is important to talk to your health care provider about birth control. For your safety and the safety of your baby, it is recommended that you wait at least 18 months (1 and a half years) before getting pregnant again, if possible. Planning and/or using birth control can help.

- Some birth control methods may affect how much breast milk your body makes. This is called your milk supply. Tell your health care provider if you are breastfeeding (also called chestfeeding) when talking about birth control.
- Birth control methods that **do not** affect your milk supply and that you can start right after having your baby are:
  - › Condoms
  - › Spermicides (creams or gels that have chemicals that stop sperm from getting to an egg)
  - › Diaphragms (silicone that covers the cervix so sperm cannot fertilize an egg)
- **Do not use an intrauterine device (IUD) for at least 6 weeks after having your baby. Your uterus needs time to heal.**
- Many people believe that they cannot get pregnant while breastfeeding. **This is not true.**
- The Lactational Amenorrhea Method (LAM) works 98% of the time to prevent pregnancy **if you are breastfeeding and you can answer YES to ALL of the following:**
  - › You have not had your period after giving birth
  - › Your baby is younger than 6 months old
  - › Your baby is fully breastfed, which means your baby:
    - › does not drink any formula.
    - › does not eat any solid foods.
    - › is fed nothing else by mouth other than medications.
  - › Your baby breastfeeds at least every 4 hours during the day
  - › Your baby breastfeeds at least every 6 hours at night

**If any of these DO NOT apply to you, you need to use another method of birth control.** Ask your primary health care provider (family doctor or nurse practitioner) if LAM is right for you.

- If you are not breastfeeding or giving your baby your own expressed breast milk, you can start most methods (like the pill, needle, or patch) right away. **Wait at least 6 weeks after having your baby before using an IUD.**

- If you are breastfeeding or giving your baby your own expressed breast milk, use progestin-only birth control. This can be started 6 weeks after having your baby if breastfeeding is well established. Progestin-only birth control may still affect your milk supply. Check your supply often. Talk with your primary health care provider if your milk supply lowers after taking birth control.
- The morning-after pill should only be used in emergencies. The morning-after pill comes in:
  - › a progestin-only pill.
  - › an estrogen (hormone) and progestin combination pill.
  - › If you are breastfeeding and you take a combination pill, you may have a lower milk supply a few days later. This should go back to normal.
- If you are breastfeeding and start hormonal birth control (like pills, implants, needles, patches, or IUDs), you may have a lower milk supply. If you think your milk supply has lowered, talk with a lactation consultant (see La Leche League below) or with your health care provider.

## Resources

- La Leche League Canada - Nova Scotia
  - › [www.lllc.ca/find-group-nova-scotia](http://www.lllc.ca/find-group-nova-scotia)

## Women and children's units (maternity) across Nova Scotia

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| • South Shore Regional Hospital                  | • Valley Regional Hospital - New Mother's Resource Clinic |
| › Phone: 902-527-5214                            | › Phone: 902-679-2657 extension 3054                      |
| • Colchester East Hants Health Centre            | • Yarmouth Regional Hospital                              |
| › Phone: 902-893-5544                            | › Phone: 902-476-1130                                     |
| • Cumberland Regional Health Care Centre         | • Aberdeen Hospital                                       |
| › Phone: 902-667-5400 extension 6144             | › Phone: 902-752-7600 extension 2530                      |
| • St. Martha's Open Arms Family Clinic           |   |
| › Phone: 902-863-2830 extension 4364             |   |
| • Cape Breton Regional Hospital Perinatal Clinic |   |
| › Phone: 902-567-7840                            |   |

This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

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