

Lactation Amenorrhea Method (LAM)

What is LAM?

LAM is a way for breastfeeding to temporarily help prevent pregnancy. It must be used correctly to work. Lactation means your body is making breastmilk and amenorrhea means you aren't having a monthly period. Breastfeeding hormones may stop your body from releasing eggs. You can't get pregnant if you don't release an egg.

How well does LAM work?

- You can get pregnant as early as one month after having a baby, when not using LAM or another method of birth control.
- If no method of birth control is used, there's about an **85%** chance of getting pregnant after 1 year of having sex.
- With perfect use (you follow the exact directions all the time) LAM is **98%** effective against pregnancy for the first 6 months after giving birth.
- Think about getting **emergency contraception** to help prevent pregnancy if you've not followed LAM correctly and you've had unprotected sex in the last 5 days.
- LAM doesn't protect you from sexually transmitted infections (STIs) or HIV.
- Use a condom **every time** you have sex (anal, oral, vaginal) to lower your risk of STIs and HIV.

When can I use LAM as birth control?

LAM only works if your:

- baby is under 6 months old **and**
- baby is fully breastfed (baby gets no other liquid or food, not even water) or nearly-fully breastfed (baby gets vitamins, water, or other fluids or nutrients once in a while and they do not disrupt the frequency of feedings) **and**
- period has not returned. This means you have not had vaginal bleeding for 2 or more days in a row (not counting bleeding during the first 2 months after giving birth)

LAM does **not** work if you don't have all 3 things above. Talk to your health care provider to see if LAM is right for you.

What are the benefits of LAM?

- It can work for up to 6 months after birth
- There is no cost and no birth control supplies are needed.
- It's effective right away
- There are no added hormones that can affect your breastmilk
- Breastfeeding has many other health benefits for you and for your baby

What are the disadvantages of LAM?

- It may be difficult for some to fully or nearly-fully breastfeed.
- Fertility can return quickly if breastfeeding is reduced.
- It's only effective for up to 6 months after you have your baby.
- If LAM is not used correctly there is a higher risk of failure from even one act of vaginal sex.

Did You Know

- You have the right to make the decision to have sex or not.
- You can plan ahead and talk to your partner(s) about how to lower your risk of pregnancy, STIs, and HIV.
- You can consider getting regular testing for STIs and HIV. Talk to your health care provider.
- Many clinics offer low or no cost birth control.

To find a clinic near you visit [ahs.ca/srh](https://www.ahs.ca/srh)

For 24/7 nurse advice and general health information, call Health Link at **811**.

Websites

- [ahs.ca/srh](https://www.ahs.ca/srh)
- [myhealth.alberta.ca](https://www.myhealth.alberta.ca)
- [ReadyOrNotAlberta.ca](https://www.ReadyOrNotAlberta.ca)
- [sexandu.ca](https://www.sexandu.ca)
- [teachingsexualhealth.ca](https://www.teachingsexualhealth.ca)

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