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](http://ahs.ca/srh)
For 24/7 nurse advice and general health information, call Health Link at 811.

Websites

- ahs.ca/srh
- myhealth.alberta.ca
- ReadyOrNotAlberta.ca
- sexandu.ca
- teachingsexualhealth.ca

*This material is for information purposes only. It should not be used in place of medical advice, instruction, or treatment. If you have questions, talk with your doctor or appropriate healthcare provider. The content on this page may not be changed without consent of the author.*