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 but only if you answer YES to 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 in addition to breastfeeding, vitamins, minerals, juice, water or any other foods are given infrequently (no more than one or two mouthfuls a day).

If you answer YES to all of these statements, there is only a one to two per cent chance of pregnancy at this time. You may choose to use a complementary birth control method.

If you answer NO to any of the statements, the chance of pregnancy increases significantly. If not planning for pregnancy, begin another method of contraception. Keep breastfeeding as often as you can for you and your baby’s health.

For more information, contact
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First Things First

Breastfeeding is a healthy choice. It is healthy for both the baby and the mother. Current recommendations are to breastfeed “exclusively” for the first six months and then to continue breastfeeding up to two years and beyond.

Non-Hormonal Birth Control Options

Breastfeeding and birth control are compatible. For best family health, allow 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 several reliable birth control choices. The following choices have no effect on the breastfeeding relationship and generally can be initiated soon after childbirth or at the postpartum check-up:

- Lactational Amenorrhea Method (LAM) (See back page for more details)
- Condoms (male and female)
- Spermicides (foam, gel, vaginal contraceptive film)
- Intra-Uterine Device (I.U.D.)
- Diaphragm (but must be refitted after childbirth)
- Vasectomy (permanent for male)
- Tubal Ligation (permanent for female)

Hormone-based Birth Control Options

Hormone-based birth control options are also compatible with breastfeeding. Current research suggests the progestin hormone received through breastfeeding has little effect on your baby.

Considering the research, it is recommended that Progesterin-only types of birth control may be used after your baby is six weeks old. Combined Estrogen-Progesterin birth control should be considered only after other methods have been ruled out as they may decrease your milk supply.

Your hormonal-based birth control choices include:

- Birth Control Pill (estrogen and progestin)
- Birth Control Patch (estrogen and progestin)
- Vaginal Contraceptive Ring (estrogen and progestin)
- Mini Pill (progestin only)
- Depo Provera (progestin only)
- Emergency Contraceptive Pills (ECP) (Another method, the sponge, is not recommended for use after childbirth.)