

## What is the Lactational Amenorrhea Method (LAM)?

Lactational Amenorrhea method is a temporary birth control method that relies on breast/chestfeeding. It can be used from birth up to 6 months if the conditions listed below are met. As producing milk is called lactating and not having a period is called amenorrhea, this method of birth control is called lactational amenorrhea (or LAM).

### How does LAM work?

By exclusively breast/chestfeeding during the 6 months after birth, the hormones that produce the breast milk will also work to stop the ovaries from releasing an egg. For this method to work, the following three conditions must be met:

1. The baby must be under 6 months of age AND
2. The birth parent must not have had a menstrual period AND
3. The baby must be exclusively breast/chestfed, with breast/chestfeeds at least every 4 hours during the day and at least every 6 hours at night. This means no pumping, no formula, and the baby gets nothing but breastmilk, or only very small and infrequent amounts of other food or drink.

If any of the conditions above change, such as you get your period or you start feeding your baby food or formula, then you need to assume the LAM is no longer working and use another form of birth control. Pregnancy can happen even before your period returns, as ovulation usually occurs before a period. It is useful to have some condoms on hand to use when one of the conditions changes, and start another reliable form of birth control as soon as possible if you do not want to become pregnant.

### How effective is LAM?

LAM is approximately 98% effective in preventing pregnancy when all the above conditions are met.

Advantages of LAM	Disadvantages of LAM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It costs nothing</li> <li>• Easy to use</li> <li>• No clinic visits or medications required</li> <li>• Does not interrupt intercourse and allows for spontaneity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is not reliable if your baby is fed anything other than breast/chest milk</li> <li>• It can only be used short term</li> <li>• Requires consistent and frequent breast/chest feeding, which may be difficult for some people</li> <li>• It is difficult to predict if your ovaries are ready to start releasing an egg (ovulating)</li> <li>• Does not protect against sexually transmitted infections (STIs)</li> </ul>

### What if I'm not sure the conditions for LAM are met?

If you have not met the conditions for LAM and are concerned about getting pregnant you could consider emergency contraception. Learn more at [www.optionsforsexualhealth.org](http://www.optionsforsexualhealth.org)

#### Questions? We're here for you!

You can visit one of our Options for Sexual Health Clinics to speak with a health care provider. Our Sex Sense Team is available Monday-Friday 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. by phone 1-800-739-7367 or by email at [SexSense.org](http://SexSense.org) to answer your questions about birth control, or any other questions about sex, sexuality, or sexual health. This fact sheet contains general information and should not be used in place of individual consultation with a qualified healthcare provider.