

# Lactation Amenorrhea Method (LAM)

## What is LAM?

LAM is a way that breastfeeding can temporarily be used to help prevent pregnancy after you have had your baby. Talk to your healthcare professional to see if this method is right for you. This method **must be used correctly** to work.

- Lactation means your body is making breast milk.
- Amenorrhea means having no monthly period.

## Does LAM work?

If used correctly, LAM provides 98 percent protection for up to the first 6 months after birth.

## What are the advantages of LAM?

- No added hormones that could affect the breastmilk.
- No birth control supplies needed.
- It is convenient and does not interrupt sex.

## When can LAM be used?

LAM may be a good choice for you **only** when all conditions below are met:

- your baby is fully breastfed from birth (no other liquids or solids except vitamins, vaccines, or medications), **and**
- your baby does not go more than 4 hours between breastfeeding during the day or 6 hours at night, **and**
- your baby is less than 6 months old **and**
- your period has not returned (a period is any spotting or bleeding after 2 months has passed since giving birth)

## When should I not use LAM anymore?

You will need to begin another method of birth control if:

- your baby is no longer fully breastfed (e.g., pumping or using expressed milk cannot be substituted for feeding at the breast), **or**
- you are giving supplements (e.g., water, juice, baby formula, baby food), **or**
- you **have** had a period (**any** spotting or bleeding after 2 months since giving birth is considered a period), **or**
- your baby goes longer than 4 hours during the day or 6 hours at night between breastfeedings, **or**
- your baby is more than 6 months old

## Things to Think About

- You could get pregnant if you don't use LAM correctly.
- Some women may find it hard to feed their baby at specific times, especially during the night.
- There is no protection from sexually transmitted infections (STIs).
- You may not know that you are pregnant because you ovulated before you got your first menstrual period.
- If you are not sure that you have used LAM correctly, use another method of birth control (e.g., condoms) and speak to a healthcare professional. Think about getting emergency contraception (EC), which can help prevent pregnancy. EC is most effective when taken within 24 hours of unprotected sex. It can be effective up to 5 days (120 hours) after unprotected sex.

## Sexual Decision Making

- You have the right to choose to have sexual intercourse or not.
- If you choose to have sex, be sure to protect yourself from pregnancy and STIs.
- To lower the risk of infection, use a condom every time you have sex.
- Talk to your partner about these choices before you have sex.

## For More Information

### Sexual and Reproductive Health

Education/Health Promotion 403-955-6515

### Clinical Services

Sheldon M. Chumir Health Centre	5 <sup>th</sup> floor, 1213–4 <sup>th</sup> St SW	403-955-6500
South Calgary Health Centre	31 Sunpark Plaza SE	403-943-9510
Sunridge Professional Building	406, 2675–36 <sup>th</sup> St NE	403-944-7666

### Website

[www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/programs/sexualhealth](http://www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/programs/sexualhealth)

For 24-hour nurse advice and health information, call Health link Alberta at 403-943-LINK (5465) in the Calgary area or 1-866-408-LINK (5465) toll-free.

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