

Lactational Amenorrhea Method (LAM)

What Is It?

The Lactational Amenorrhea Method (LAM) is the use of breastfeeding as a temporary family planning method and a bridge to a longer term method. ("Lactational" means related to breastfeeding and "Amenorrhea" means not having menstrual bleeding.)

How Effective Is It?

If 100 young women use LAM in the first six months after childbirth, typically two of them would become pregnant. While breastfeeding **exclusively**, LAM is even more effective (one pregnancy among 200 young women).

How Does LAM Work?

LAM works by preventing ovulation, because breastfeeding changes the rate at which natural hormones are released.

Advantages

- * Effective in preventing pregnancy for at least six months.
- * Encourages the best breastfeeding practices that have health benefits for the mother and baby.
- * Can be used immediately after childbirth.
- * No need to do anything at the time of sexual intercourse.
- * No direct cost for family planning or for feeding the baby.
- * No supplies or procedures needed to prevent pregnancy.

Disadvantages

- * Effectiveness after six months is not certain.
- * **Frequent breastfeeding may be difficult for some adolescent mothers.**
- * Does not provide protection against STIs/HIV.
- * If the mother has HIV, there is some chance that breastmilk will pass HIV to the baby.

Possible Side Effects

There are no side effects associated with LAM.

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CLIENT INSTRUCTIONS

Explain the following to the client:

When LAM Can Be Used

- * Menstrual period has not returned.
- * Baby is being breastfed exclusively, or receiving very little other food besides breast milk. Baby does not go for long periods without breastfeeding, either during the day or night.
- * The baby is less than six months old.
- * If **all** the above conditions are met, then LAM can be used. A longer term family planning method should be decided upon and started before LAM is no longer effective.

When LAM Cannot Be Used

When any one or more of the following are true:

- * Baby reaches six months of age.
- * Menstrual bleeding begins.
- * The baby is receiving supplemental foods.

How to Make Breastfeeding Effective

- * Breastfeed on demand, day and night, and feed from both breasts.
- * **Avoid intervals of more than four hours between any daytime feeds and more than six hours between any nighttime feeds.**
- * Breastfeed exclusively or nearly exclusively for about six months.
- * Do not use pacifiers, nipples, or bottles.
- * Express breastmilk if separated from the baby.
- * Do not give the baby other liquids. If the baby is thirsty, the mother should drink more.

LAM Does Not Protect Against STIs/HIV

To protect against STIs/HIV and provide further protection against pregnancy, use a condom for every act of intercourse.

Reasons to Return to Provider

- * Anytime there is a problem.
- * A resupply of condoms is needed (never run out completely before returning).
- * Either partner thinks s/he may have been exposed to a STI.

Have the Client Repeat this Information Back to You.