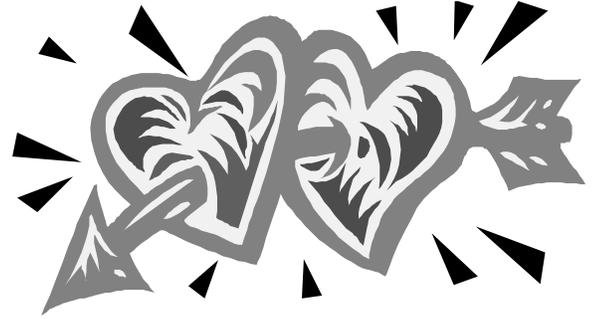


# Birth Control and Breastfeeding



While nursing your baby, you may not have a menstrual period, especially during the first six months. This is one of the benefits of nursing! Some women wonder if this will protect them from getting pregnant. Here are the facts:

Because of a delay in ovulation that occurs in all women, birth control is not needed during the first 3 weeks after delivery. After that, anything is possible! No birth control method is fool proof, except abstinence. However, exclusive breastfeeding (baby gets mother's milk only) can give you the same level of protection as birth control pills, if you meet all the conditions below:

- ♥ Your period has not returned.
- ♥ Your baby is less than 6 months old.
- ♥ Your baby nurses frequently at the breast both day and night (at least 8 times in 24 hours).
- ♥ Your baby does not get any pacifiers, bottles or solid foods like cereal.

If you don't meet all these conditions or prefer another method of birth control, non-hormonal methods (such as condoms, diaphragms, etc) are the best choice. These methods will not impact milk supply.

Hormonal methods (whether pills, depo or implants) can reduce milk supply. The effect of hormonal methods on milk supply can vary from one mother to another. Ones that contain estrogen reduce milk supply quickly. Some mothers report better results with progesterone only but any hormonal method may reduce your supply. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that women delay using estrogen/progesterone combinations until at least 6 months after delivery and wait at least 6 weeks before beginning a progesterone only method. (It's best to abstain from sex for the first six weeks to allow your body to heal.)

To establish a good milk supply, use a barrier method for at least the first six weeks. Continued use of barrier methods after 6 weeks is best. If you choose not to, talk to your doctor about hormonal methods. Wait at least 6 weeks to begin progesterone only methods and six months for estrogen/progesterone combinations.



*Exclusive breastfeeding will delay the return of your period!*



Breastfeeding Awareness and Support Program  
Healthy Baby Line  
1-800-986-BABY



Pennsylvania WIC Program  
1-800-WIC-WINS  
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