
▶ **What is the Lactational Amenorrhea Method (LAM)?**

LAM is a temporary method of birth control that relies on exclusive breast feeding. It can be used during the first six months after having a baby.

Lactation means producing breast milk. Amenorrhea means not having a period.

▶ **How does it work?**

Breastfeeding stimulates your body to release hormones which stop your ovaries from releasing eggs (ovulation). Without ovulation, you can't get pregnant.

For LAM to work, all the following conditions must be occurring:

1. The baby must be under six months of age

AND

2. The woman must not have had a period since the baby was born

AND

3. The baby must be exclusively breastfed

Explanation:

- At about six months, you will begin to offer your baby solid foods. When solids are added to a baby's diet, breastfeeding may be reduced, which causes LAM to be less effective.

Your baby is "totally" or "almost totally" breastfed, means that you are breastfeeding on demand, day and night and not giving your baby any other foods or liquids (except prescribed vitamins or medications)

The length of time between breast feedings is no more than four hours during the day and six hours during the night.

▶ **How effective is it?**

If all the above conditions are met, LAM is 98 per cent effective in preventing pregnancy

▶ **What are the advantages to using LAM?**

- It is effective (98%) and free
- No clinic visits or medications to use
- Does not require the use of hormones
- There are no side effects
- Does not interrupt intercourse
- Helps the woman's body return to the pre-pregnant state (normal weight)
- Suitable for breastfeeding women

▶ **What are the disadvantages?**

- Only lasts for six months after the baby is born
- Not reliable if your baby is fed formula or any other food
- To maintain effective protection against pregnancy, another method of contraception must be used as soon as your period starts again.
- It does not protect against sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

▶ **What else do I need to know?**

- Offering a baby a pacifier (soother) may increase the length of time between feeds, which can reduce the effectiveness of LAM.
- Breastfeeding needs to occur **often** to prevent ovulation. The longer the time between feeds the greater the chance ovulation can occur.

Who can you talk to if you have more questions?

If you have concerns or question, call and ask for Sexual Health, or visit the health unit website www.simcoemuskokahealth.org



**simcoe
muskoka**
DISTRICT HEALTH UNIT

Tel: 705-721-7520
Toll free: 1-877-721-7520
www.simcoemuskokahealth.org

▶ **References:**

[Options for Sexual Health](http://www.optionsforsexualhealth.org)

www.optionsforsexualhealth.org

[World Health organization](http://www.who.int)

[World alliance for Breastfeeding Action](http://www.waafba.org)

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Lactational Amenorrhea

