

Chapter 9

LACTATIONAL AMENORRHEA METHOD (LAM)

WHAT IS THE LACTATIONAL AMENORRHEA METHOD?

The LAM primarily works by preventing ovulation. Frequent breastfeeding temporarily prevents the release of the natural hormones that cause ovulation. This method is considered effective under the following three conditions: (1) the monthly menstruation has not returned, (2) the baby is fully or nearly fully breastfed and often day and night, and (3) the baby is less than six months old.

HOW EFFECTIVE IS THE LAM?

- When typically used, about 2 per 100 women in the first six months after childbirth become pregnant.
- When used correctly, about 1 per 100 women who use the method in the first six months after childbirth become pregnant.

The risk of pregnancy is the greatest when a woman cannot fully or nearly fully breastfeed her infant.

HOW IS THE LAM USED?

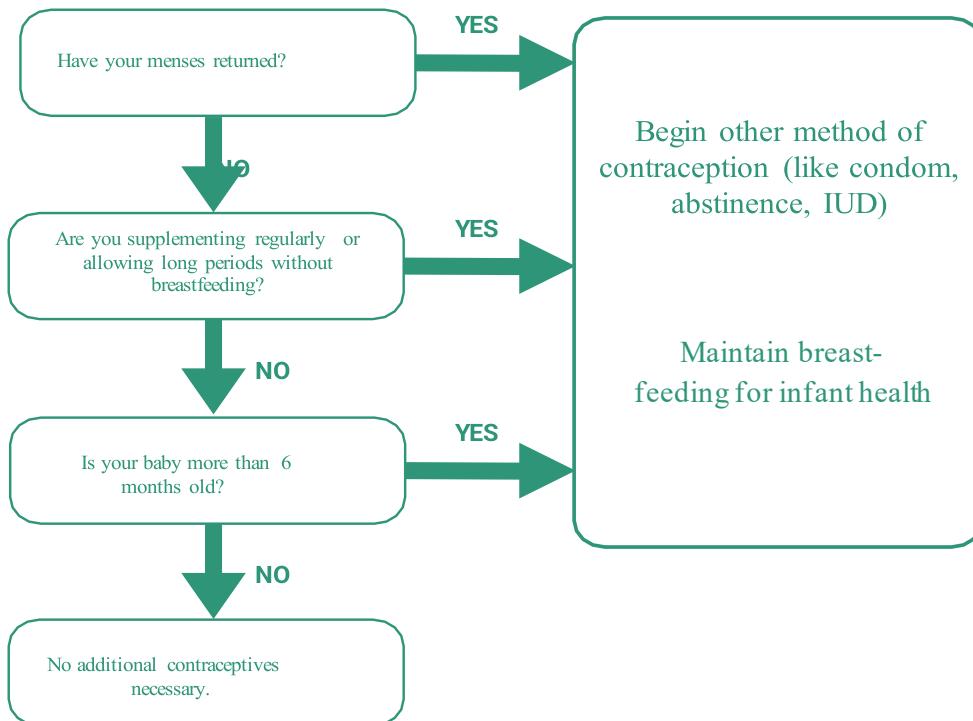
- The LAM can be started immediately after birth up to six months after childbirth. The client should breastfeed immediately (within one hour) or as soon as possible after the baby is born.
- The method can be used any time if the client has been fully or nearly fully breastfeeding her baby since birth and her monthly bleeding has not returned.



The following points should be provided to the client:

- Feed on demand (whenever the baby wants to be fed) and at least 10 to 12 times a day in the first few weeks after childbirth and 8 to 10 times a day thereafter, including at least once at night in the first months.
- Daytime feedings should not be more than four hours apart, and night-time feedings should not be more than six hours apart. Some babies may need gentle encouragement to breastfeed more often even at night.
- Start other foods at six months in addition to breast milk. At this age, breast milk can no longer fully nourish a growing baby.
- The client should plan for another method while the LAM criteria still apply to continue protection from pregnancy.

Figure 5. Algorithm of the LAM



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WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES OF THE LAM?

- The LAM is universally available to all postpartum breastfeeding women.
- With the LAM, protection from an unplanned pregnancy begins immediately postpartum.
- The LAM contributes to improved maternal and child health and nutrition breastfeeding and weaning practices.
- The LAM serves as a bridge toward the use of other FP methods.

WHAT ARE THE DISADVANTAGES OF THE LAM?

- The effectiveness of the LAM may decrease among mothers who are separated from their child for extended periods.
- Full or nearly full breastfeeding may be difficult to maintain for up to six months.

WHO CAN USE THE LAM?

All breastfeeding women can safely use the LAM, but a client in the following circumstances may want to consider other contraceptive methods:

- Has HIV/AIDS
- Is using certain medications during breastfeeding (including mood-altering drugs, reserpine, ergotamine, antimetabolites, cyclosporine, high doses of corticosteroids, bromocriptine, radioactive drugs, lithium, and certain anticoagulants)
- The newborn has a condition that makes breastfeeding difficult (including premature babies and those that need intensive neonatal care, are unable to digest food normally, or have deformities of the mouth, jaw, or palate)

WHEN SHOULD THE CLIENT SWITCH FROM THE LAM TO ANOTHER METHOD?

When any of the three LAM criteria is no longer met, another FP method must be introduced to the client in a timely manner to ensure birth spacing.

- The client can switch to another method any time she wants while using the LAM. A

client is considered not pregnant if she still meets the three LAM criteria. She can begin a new method with no need for a pregnancy test, examinations, or evaluations.

- To prevent pregnancy, the client must switch to another method as soon as any of the three LAM criteria no longer applies.

The FP service provider should help the client choose a new method before she needs it. A client who wishes to continue breastfeeding can choose from several hormonal or non-hormonal methods.

WHAT IMPORTANT INFORMATION SHOULD BE PROVIDED TO CLIENTS WHO CHOOSE TO USE THE LAM?

- The LAM is an FP method based on breastfeeding that provides contraception for the mother and the best nutrition for the baby.
- The LAM can be effective for up to six months after childbirth as long as monthly menstruation has not returned and the client is fully or nearly fully breastfeeding.
- For optimum effectiveness, the LAM requires frequent breastfeeding (day and night). The baby should be fully or nearly fully breastfed.