



## Birth Control and Breastfeeding

Once you have settled into life as a breastfeeding mother, you will no doubt enjoy renewing your relationship with your partner as well. One of the welcome advantages of exclusive round-the-clock breastfeeding (no water, juice, formula, solids or other supplements for the baby) is that it significantly reduces the chance of your becoming pregnant again during the first six months because it delays the return of your ovulation cycles.



You will *probably* not become pregnant, even without active contraceptive use, if:

- your baby is less than six months old,
- your periods have not yet started again,
- AND you are fully breastfeeding both day and night.

## Using contraceptives while breastfeeding

At about four to six weeks after giving birth, once your milk supply is firmly established, you may begin using contraceptives. But be sure to discuss the issue with your baby's pediatrician and your gynecologist first. There are no harmful effects on infants when the mother uses hormonal contraceptives, but their use may diminish milk supply (</English/ages-stages/baby/breastfeeding/Pages/low-breast-milk-supply.aspx>), especially during the early weeks of breastfeeding. This is especially true when hormonal contraception is combined with stressors such as a return to work or less-frequent breastfeeding. Birth control pills with high doses of estrogen are more likely to decrease milk supply.

IUDs, condoms, a diaphragm, or a cervical cap and spermicide may be considered as alternative choices for now (even if somewhat less effective), since these forms of birth control are unlikely to interfere with your milk supply.

**Last Updated** 7/20/2022

**Source** Adapted from New Mother's Guide to Breastfeeding, 3rd Edition (Copyright © 2017 American Academy of Pediatrics)

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