

Contraception after you have had a baby

English

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You can help prevent an unplanned pregnancy by using effective contraception. There are different methods of contraception. You can use some methods of contraception after you have had your baby. When deciding which method is best for you, it is important to know:

- what each method is
- how it works
- how well it works in preventing unplanned pregnancy
- when you can start using it
- the advantages and disadvantages
- if you can use the method while you are breastfeeding

Recommended options if you are breastfeeding

Breastfeeding can be a method of contraception. Talk to your doctor or nurse if you would like to use breastfeeding as a method of contraception. This method does not work if you use a breast pump. Breastfeeding is 98% effective in preventing pregnancy if:

- you have not had a period since you had your baby **and**
- your baby is less than six months old **and**
- you are only breastfeeding. This means that you are not giving your baby any formula, or other food or drink **and**
- you are breastfeeding regularly. This means at least once every 4 hours during the day and once every 6 hours at night.

If you do not want to become pregnant, you will need to use another method of contraception when:

- you get your periods **or**
- you start to give your baby other food or drink.

When breastfeeding, you can use the following methods safely:

The contraceptive implant

You can have the contraceptive implant (ImplanonNXT®) inserted immediately after you have had your baby. The contraceptive implant is more than 99.9% effective in preventing pregnancy.

Intrauterine devices (IUD)

You will need to wait at least four weeks after you have had your baby to have either the copper IUD or a hormonal IUD (Mirena® or Kyleena®) inserted. They start working quickly and are between 99.2 and 99.8% effective in preventing pregnancy. If you are having problems or if you want to have another baby, both types of IUD can be removed easily by a doctor.

The contraceptive injection

You can start the contraceptive injection (Depo Provera) immediately after you have had your baby. Only a very small amount of the dose is passed to your baby through breastfeeding and does not affect the amount of milk you produce. The contraceptive injection is between 94% and 99.8% effective in preventing pregnancy.

The Progesterone Only Pill (POP or “mini pill”)

You can start the mini pill immediately after you have your baby. The mini pill is between 91% and 99.7% effective in preventing pregnancy.

Condoms

You can use male and female condoms as soon as you start having sex again. Condoms help prevent pregnancy and provide the best available protection from sexually transmissible infections (STIs). They are 79% to 82% effective in preventing pregnancy. You can buy female condoms online or from Family Planning NSW.

The diaphragm

You can use the single size diaphragm (Caya®) from six weeks after you have had your baby. It is between 88% and 96% effective at preventing pregnancy.

Natural family planning

Natural family planning monitors physical changes that happen during your menstrual cycle. It can be up to 99% effective, but as low as 76% effective depending on how well you use it and the method you choose. You need to talk to a natural family planning specialist. The specialist may recommend using more than one method at the same time. Natural family planning can be difficult to use when breastfeeding. Natural family planning can also be used to help you become pregnant.

Sterilisation

Sterilisation is a permanent, surgical method of contraception that is more than 99% effective in preventing pregnancy. Women can choose to have a tubal ligation or tubal occlusion. Men can have a vasectomy. Tubal occlusion and tubal ligation are best performed at least three months after you have had your baby. However, it may be recommended that you wait a little longer. Caring for a young baby can be stressful and it may not be the best time to make a permanent decision.

Emergency contraception

If you have had unprotected sex and do not want to become pregnant, you should use emergency contraception from 3 weeks after you have had your baby. Levonorgestrel (LNG) emergency contraception pill is the preferred method when breastfeeding as only a very small amount of LNG will enter your breast milk. Breastfeeding is not recommended for one week after taking the Ulipristal Acetate (UPA) emergency contraception pill. The Copper IUD can be used as emergency contraception in some situations.

After having unprotected sex, you should take the emergency contraceptive pill as soon as possible. This means within 72 hours (three days) for LNG emergency contraception or within 120 hours (five days) for the UPA emergency contraception. Emergency contraception can be up to 85% effective in preventing pregnancy. The effectiveness will depend on how soon you take the emergency contraception. You can buy the emergency contraception pill from a pharmacist without a doctor's prescription.

Options that are not recommended in early breast feeding

The following methods of contraception are not recommended until your baby is at least six weeks old, and only after talking to your doctor. These methods contain oestrogen.

- The combined pill ('the Pill')
- The vaginal ring (NuvaRing®)

Recommended options if you are not breastfeeding

If you are not breastfeeding, you can choose any type of contraception. You can start the pill or vaginal ring three to six weeks after you have had your baby. The contraceptive injection and implant can be started straight after you have had your baby. For all other methods, the starting time is the same for breastfeeding and non-breastfeeding women.

You can talk to your doctor or nurse about contraception. They will support you make the best decision for your needs.

What if I need help speaking English?

Professional interpreters are available if you need help in understanding or speaking in English. Interpreter services are free and confidential. If you would like an interpreter, please ask the staff or call Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) on 131 450.

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For more information: Family Planning NSW

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Local Contact

Person's name

Contact number
