

UVM ScholarWorks

Postpartum Family Planning: Increasing awareness among patients of the health benefits of spacing pregnancies and options for postpartum birth control

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Item Type | Presentation;Presentation |
| Authors | Woodruff, Hannah |
| Download date | 2026-05-09 13:38:24 |
| Item License | http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/ |
| Link to Item | https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.14849/2229 |

What about breastfeeding as birth control?

Breastfeeding can be effective for birth control, but only if the following conditions are met:

- Nursing every 6 hours during the day, every 4 hours at night
- Less than 6 months postpartum and period has not returned

Pumping, introducing solid foods, and your baby sleeping for longer stretches at night can all make breastfeeding less effective as birth control.

While breastfeeding has many other health benefits for both mom and baby, many women chose to start an additional contraceptive method in the postpartum period.

Have questions?

Ask your healthcare provider, and check out the following websites:

- **Planned Parenthood**
- **ACOG- Postpartum Birth Control**
- **KellyMom**
- **La Leche League**



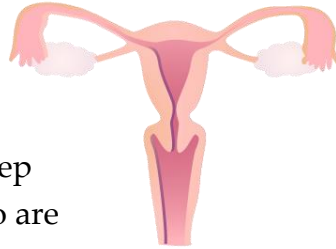
Postpartum Family Planning

Hannah Woodruff, MS3
Larner College of Medicine

Cultural beliefs, personal experiences with pregnancy and parenting, finances and life goals are just a few things women consider when making decisions about family size. Know the facts about postpartum fertility so that you can choose what's right for you.

When will my period return?

The timing of the first postpartum period varies from woman to woman. Prolactin, the hormone responsible for milk production, can keep ovulation from occurring in women who are exclusively breastfeeding.



Breastfeeding: Among women who are breastfeeding, the timing of the first postpartum period can vary. One study found the median time to first period was 7 months postpartum.

Not breastfeeding: Women who are not breastfeeding can expect their period to return 6-8 weeks postpartum.

What are the health benefits of spacing out pregnancies?

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) recommends at minimum waiting **6 months** postpartum before becoming pregnant again. Waiting **18-24 months** may be even better. A short time in between pregnancies is associated with health complications.

| For mom: | For baby: |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anemia Uterine rupture if attempting VBAC | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low birth weight Preterm birth Stillbirth |

What are my birth control options?

For most women, all types of birth control are an option. Some types of birth control can be started immediately after delivery in the hospital. For others, it is best to wait until the 6-week postpartum visit.

Options that contain estrogen (combined birth control pill, patch, ring) may affect milk supply, so for women who plan to breastfeed it is often best to wait to start those options until supply is established (around 6 weeks).

Longest-acting: IUDs (3-10 years), implant (3 years)

Able to start immediately after delivery: IUD, implant, shot (Depo-Provera), progesterone-only pill (mini-pill).

Even though IUDs and implants last for years, they are quick and typically easy to remove if your family plans change.

Effectiveness:

