A close-up photograph of a woman with dark, curly hair smiling warmly while holding a baby. The baby is looking towards the camera with a curious expression. The woman's face is partially visible, showing her teeth and a joyful expression. The baby is wearing a light-colored, long-sleeved top.

# birth control after baby

FAMILY PLANNING GUIDE for NEW MOMS

# **Congratulations on your beautiful new baby!**

Whether you want more or you are all done, this book is for you. Learn about birth control, birth spacing, sex and relationships for postpartum moms.



# Choosing a birth control method.

There are great contraceptive choices **for every lifestyle**. Talk with your health care provider to find out about your options and make a plan.



QUICK FACTS

# IUD



## WHAT IS IT?

The IUD is a little, T-shaped piece of plastic that is inserted into your uterus.

- \* It can require some pre-planning with your doctor to make sure you can get the IUD.
- \* Once it has been inserted, you don't have to do anything except check the string once a month to be sure everything is still in place.
- \* The IUD offers five to ten years of protection, depending on the type.
- \* The IUD is one of the most effective methods – greater than 99%.
- \* It can be removed at any time.

## TYPES:

**MIRENA** A plastic IUD that over time releases small amounts of the hormone progesterone. *Mirena* may make your period lighter and for some women, it stops completely.

**PARAGARD** A copper IUD that has no hormones and can last for up to ten years. Your periods may stay the same or become heavier with *Paragard*.

## I'm a proud mother of three, but after this baby I am done!

That's why I am using the IUD. I decided to use the IUD while I was pregnant and my nurse helped me make a plan to get it after my baby was born. I had to go in for an extra appointment, but it was quick and easy. The IUD is safe to use while I am breastfeeding and can keep me from getting pregnant for at least five years. Plus, with three children I don't have time to remember to take a pill or get a shot. If I do change my mind, it is easy to remove.

Kayla

Could using the IUD hurt my future babies?

**NO.** The stories on the Internet about babies being born with IUDs implanted in their skin are not true. There are no confirmed cases of a baby being born with an IUD implanted anywhere on them.



I am a single mom and at my house, I am in charge of everything. Now I am taking charge of my birth control.

I talked with my doctor about all of my options and I chose the implant. She told me it was one of the most effective choices and that I wouldn't have to think about birth control for three years! I have so much going on that it will save me time and make sure I don't get pregnant by mistake. Right now, my little man keeps me pretty busy, but I feel good knowing that when I meet a grown up man worth my time, I will be ready.

Paula

#### QUICK FACTS



## Implant

### WHAT IS IT?

The implant, or *Nexplanon*, is a tiny rod that sits under the skin on your upper arm and is almost invisible.

- \* It is a very effective birth control method.
- \* Once inserted, it lasts for up to three years and can be removed easily at any time.
- \* It is a hormonal method which has progesterone.
- \* You will likely have menstrual cycle changes with the implant.

Will taking birth control while I'm breastfeeding affect my milk?

**NO.** You can take birth control when you are breastfeeding. There are a lot of options. Hormone methods that only contain progestin are great to use while breastfeeding. The Mini-Pill is a progestin-only version of the pill that is good for breastfeeding mothers. The copper IUD is hormone free. If you are worried about your milk supply you should avoid birth control with estrogen until breastfeeding is working well for you and your baby.

**Nobody really talked to me about birth control, so it is no big surprise that I got pregnant young.**

I now use the shot. Going to the clinic every three months is worth it to know that I am taking care of myself. Now that my older daughter is a teenager, we go together. I don't like to think about her having sex, but I am definitely not ready for her to get pregnant. Instead of following in my footsteps as a teen mom, she is following my footsteps to the doctor and learning to take care of herself.

Carmen & Ana

#### QUICK FACTS



## Depo-Provera

### WHAT IS IT?

The *Depo-Provera* shot, or the "Depo" shot, is a hormonal method which uses progesterone that you get every three months.

- \* It is a very effective if you get your shot on time. Missed or late shots mean you're not protected.
- \* Your periods will be irregular on Depo – some women have more bleeding and others have no periods at all!
- \* Some women gain weight while using Depo, but exercising and eating right can help.

Is birth control going to make me fat?

**NO.** A small weight gain is a side effect for some forms of birth control, but the weight gain is slight. If you are exercising and eating right it does not have to happen to you.





I was so excited when I found out I was pregnant the first time. I was really happy to become a mom.

But when I found out that I was pregnant again at my postpartum visit, I was shocked. Don't get me wrong, I love being a mom, but I don't want any more surprises! My boyfriend and I talked about what we are going to do to make sure this doesn't happen to us again. We chose the patch. It is easy to use and every week, when I change it, I feel good knowing that I am protected.

Brittany

## Is it okay if I have estrogen in my birth control?

**YES.** However, you should avoid estrogen in your birth control if:

- \* You are breastfeeding and your baby is less than six months old.
- \* You are a smoker over 35.
- \* Have a history of heart disease, heart attack, or stroke.
- \* Have a history of blood clots in your legs or lungs, high blood pressure or other health risks.

## The Patch

QUICK FACTS



### WHAT IS IT?

The patch is a thin square of plastic, like a Band-Aid.

- \* The patch is easy to use and works like the pill. You only have to change your patch once a week.
- \* It is easy to check to be sure that your patch is in place and this can help you feel more confident that you are protected.
- \* The patch is a hormonal method using both estrogen and progesterone.
- \* The patch is very effective, as long as it is changed weekly. It is highly effective if used correctly. If you forget to change it, the protection goes away.



**We love our two children, and I am having so much fun now that they are a little older.**

It is great to be able to ride our bikes to the park after school. They are becoming more independent and it makes life at our house easier. I don't want to go back to the days of having a newborn right now, so I use the ring. I am comfortable with touching my body, so inserting it does not bother me at all. With the ring I don't have to think about my birth control every day.

Anita

## The Ring

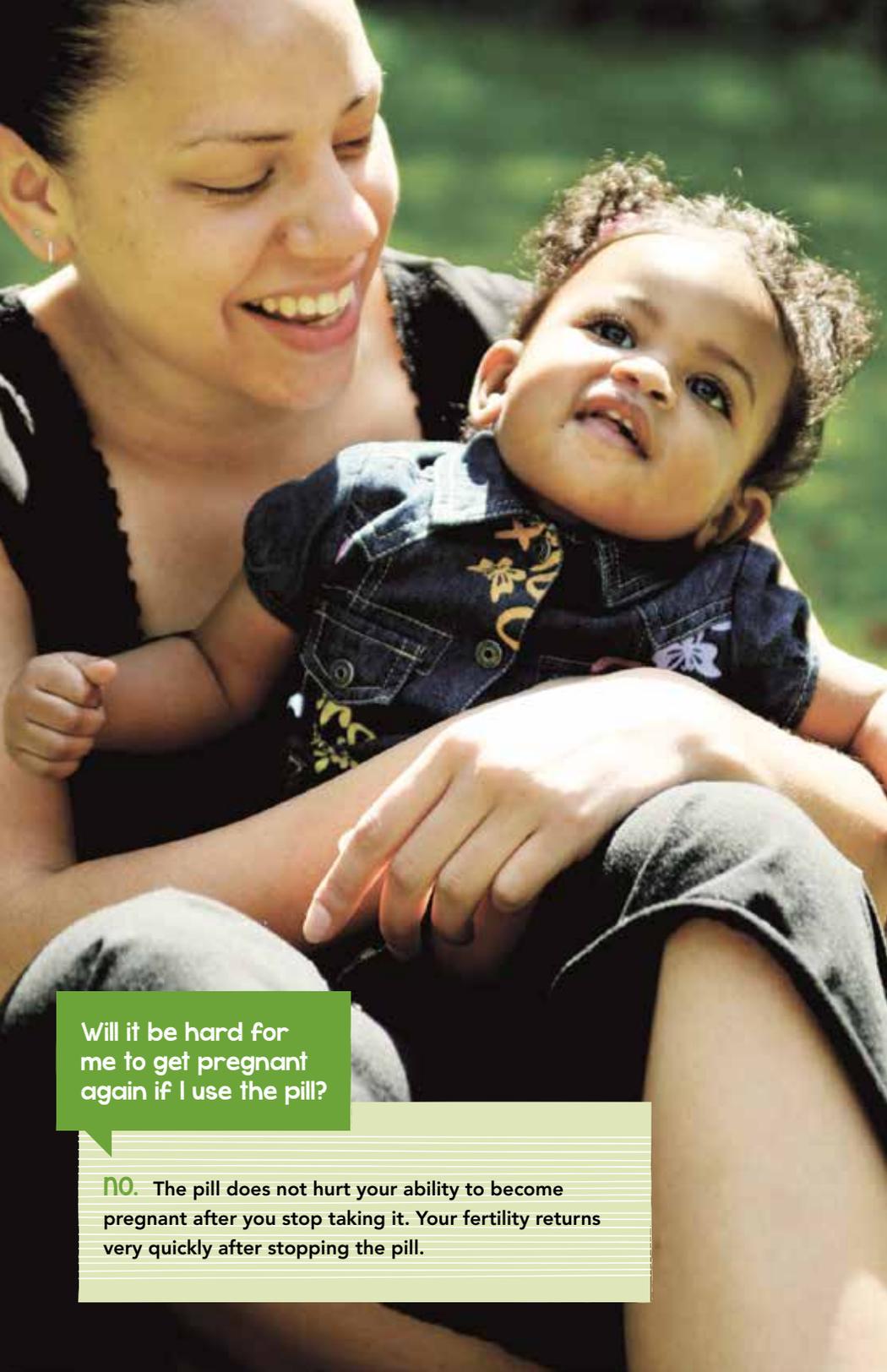
QUICK FACTS



### WHAT IS IT?

The ring is a soft, small band that you insert yourself into your vagina.

- \* The ring is highly effective if used correctly, but you have to remember to change it.
- \* You keep it in place for 21 days (three weeks) and remove for seven days so that you can have your monthly period.
- \* The ring is a hormonal method using both estrogen and progestin.



I came from a big family, and my husband and I want my daughter to have lots of brothers and sisters.

But I know that it is not good for my body or for my baby if I have children too close together. That's why I use the pill. When I decide that it is time for my family to grow again, it is easy to stop. My nurse told me that I could become pregnant again right away. Part of being a good mom is taking care of yourself first.

Michelle

Will it be hard for me to get pregnant again if I use the pill?

**no.** The pill does not hurt your ability to become pregnant after you stop taking it. Your fertility returns very quickly after stopping the pill.

QUICK FACTS

## The Pill



### WHAT IS IT?

The pill is a hormonal method – the most common type contains both estrogen and progesterone.

- \* The progestin-only Mini-Pill is available for moms who breastfeed or who cannot take estrogen.
- \* You have to take the pill everyday at the same time.
- \* It is highly effective when used correctly.
- \* Worried you'll forget? Explore other options.

## Essure

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### WHAT IS IT?

Essure is a permanent procedure **for women** that takes about 10 minutes in your doctor's office. It does not require surgery and is hormone free.

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- \* Small inserts are placed in your fallopian tubes which cause them to become blocked over the next three months.
- \* Essure has been shown to be one of the most effective options available for women.

## Tubal Ligation

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### WHAT IS IT?

Tubal ligation, or "getting your tubes tied," is an outpatient surgical procedure with a short recovery time.

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- \* Your fallopian tubes are clamped and blocked or severed and sealed to keep eggs from reaching your uterus and being fertilized.
- \* It's highly effective.



Keeping up with our two children is a big job. Making supper, helping with homework, tee-ball practice, and dance keeps me and my husband busy!

We couldn't be happier with our little family, and we have decided that we are all done. Since there are no more babies in our future, I wanted to learn about permanent birth control options. My nurse told me that there are great options for both men and women and that there are programs to help with the cost.

Donna & Ray

## Vasectomy

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### WHAT IS IT?

A vasectomy is a safe, minor surgical procedure **for men** that takes about 30 minutes in a doctor's office.

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- \* A vasectomy will not hurt a man's ability to have sex or ejaculate (come), it just prevents sperm from mixing with his fluids.
- \* Men will not fully clear all of the sperm from their system until 10 to 20 ejaculations after the procedure, but once the sperm count is zero, it is considered to be a very effective method of contraception. This can take two to four months.

After having a vasectomy, will I still be able to come?

**YES.** A vasectomy does not change a man's sensations, the ability to have sex, or ejaculate (come). A vasectomy prevents sperm from mixing with his fluids before he ejaculates. Without sperm, he cannot get a woman pregnant.

# What's the best contraceptive choice for me?

Women have so many options of birth control to choose from. Finding one that fits your life is important. Here are some questions to get you started. Knowing the answers can help you and your health care provider work together to come up with the best contraception plan for you.

- \* Do you want to have more children?
- \* How many kids do you think you'd like to have?
- \* How many years do you want in between your children?  
The recommendation is to wait at least 18 months between pregnancies.
- \* If you don't want more children, do you want a permanent birth control method?
- \* How often do you want to think about your birth control – daily, weekly, monthly or longer?
- \* Are you good at remembering things or are you forgetful?

## Contraception Costs

Cost is an important part of making a decision about a birth control plan. Medicaid and most insurance plans will help with or cover the cost of contraceptive methods. No insurance? There are programs that can help to cover the cost. Take a look at how much each method costs on its own. Some methods may cost more up front, but end up being more affordable over time.

### Are you forgetful?

**YES.** You can get FREE reminders for your birth control and appointments. Sign up for free reminders at [bedsider.org](http://bedsider.org) or by texting MyBC to 42411.

# Compare Contraceptive Methods

METHOD	EFFECTIVE	STI PROTECTION	DISCRETE
The IUD	★★★★★	⊘ (none)	★★★★★
The Implant	★★★★★	⊘ (none)	★★★★★
Depo Shot	★★★	⊘ (none)	★★★★★
The Ring	★★★	⊘ (none)	★★★★★
The Patch	★★★	⊘ (none)	★★
The Pill	★★★	⊘ (none)	★★
Condoms	★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Sterilization	★★★★★	⊘ (none)	★★★★★

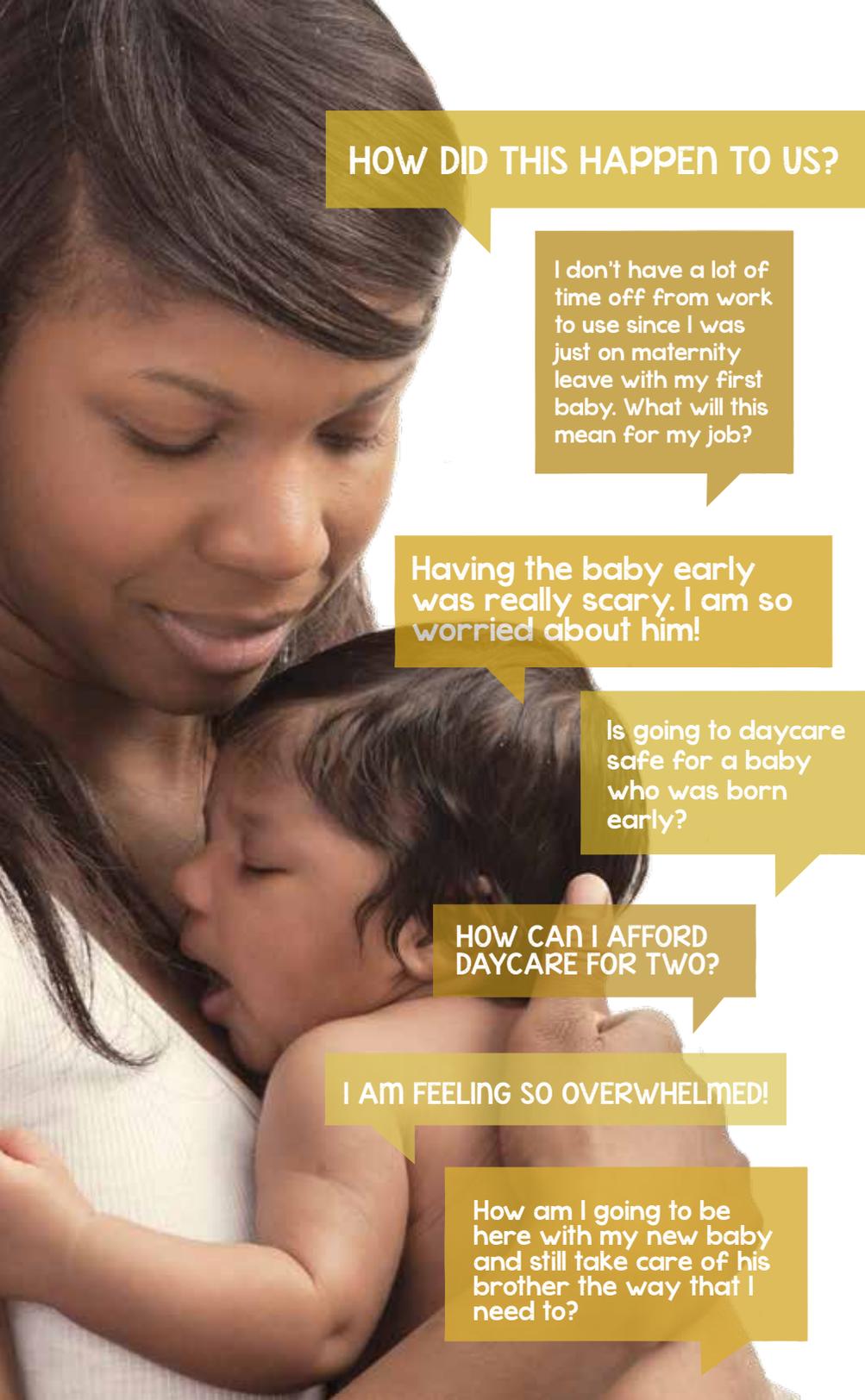
Where can I find out more?

To find out about side effects and learn more about the method of your choice, talk to your provider or visit <http://bedsider.org/methods>.

METHOD	COST	HOW WILL IT LAST	COST OVER TIME
The IUD	0 – \$800 (one time cost)	5 -10 years	Mirena (5 years) – \$9 per month / \$108 per year Paraguard (10 years) – \$6.67 per month / \$80 per year
The Implant	0 – \$800 (one time cost)	3 years	\$13 per month / \$156 per year
Depo Shot	0 – \$75 per shot	3 months	\$25 per month / \$300 per year
The Ring	0 – \$55 a month	1 month	Up to \$55 per month / \$660 per year
The Patch	0 – \$55 a month	1 month	Up to \$55 per month / \$660 per year
The Pill	0 – \$25 per month	1 month	Up to \$25 per month / \$300 per year
Condoms	\$1 per condom	Use once	\$1 for each sexual encounter
Essure	0 – \$3000	Permanent	Up to \$3000 / \$25 per month
Vasectomy	0 – \$1000	Permanent	Up to \$1000 / \$8 per month
Emergency Contraception	\$0 – \$60	Use once	\$0 – \$60 per use

# How soon is too soon?

New moms can and do get pregnant  
before they are ready.



HOW DID THIS HAPPEN TO US?

I don't have a lot of time off from work to use since I was just on maternity leave with my first baby. What will this mean for my job?

Having the baby early was really scary. I am so worried about him!

Is going to daycare safe for a baby who was born early?

HOW CAN I AFFORD DAYCARE FOR TWO?

I AM FEELING SO OVERWHELMED!

How am I going to be here with my new baby and still take care of his brother the way that I need to?

# Facts about birth spacing.

## DID YOU KNOW THAT IT IS IMPORTANT TO SPACE YOUR PREGNANCIES?

It is recommended that you have **at least 18 months between your pregnancies.** There are lots of reasons why birth spacing helps a mother and her children to be healthier.

Pregnancies that are too close together put mothers and babies at risk. The closer together your pregnancies are, the greater the risk.

By waiting at least 18 months between pregnancies, you are giving your body time to heal and get back to normal. You can enjoy the time with your older children, and you are giving your new baby a better chance of being born on time without complications.

Can I get pregnant if I have sex during my period?

**YES.** Though it's less likely that you will become pregnant. However, sperm can live for up to five days inside of a woman, so you can still become pregnant.

### RISKS FOR THE FAMILY

- \* More expense and financial strain.
- \* Increased stress on parents' relationship.
- \* Older siblings are more at risk for learning and behavior problems.
- \* More demanding for parents to take care of more than one young baby.

### RISKS FOR MOM

- \* Preterm labor.
- \* Third trimester bleeding.
- \* Uterine rupture.
- \* Increased risk for stress and postpartum depression.

### RISKS FOR BABY

- \* Premature birth.
- \* Low birth weight.
- \* Being small for their gestational age.
- \* Increased risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

# It Can Happen to You.

**GETTING PREGNANT AGAIN QUICKLY. HERE ARE THE FACTS ABOUT HOW SOON A WOMAN CAN GET PREGNANT AGAIN AFTER SHE GIVES BIRTH.**

- \* You can get pregnant as early as three weeks after you have your baby. If you are not breastfeeding, begin using a birth control method before you have sex again for the first time.
- \* If you breastfeed partially, pump or supplement breastfeeding with baby food or formula, you can become pregnant within six weeks after delivery. You should start a birth control method four to six weeks after having your baby.
- \* If you are fully breastfeeding, you will have pregnancy protection for six months or until your period returns.
- \* It is difficult to practice "fertility awareness" or tracking your monthly cycle to know when you could get pregnant, before your cycle returns to normal. When your period first comes back, counting the days in your cycle might not be reliable. Give your body a few months to get back to normal.
- \* Temporary methods, like condoms, are a good option until you can get started with your preferred birth control method. Emergency contraception like Plan B can help if you didn't use protection as planned.
- \* One in 12 new mothers become pregnant again less than six months after delivering their baby.

**Will withdrawal work as long as the man pulls out?**

**NO.** What you may not know is that men release fluids even before they ejaculate. Men can release fluids the entire time you are having sex. This means you can get pregnant even if he pulls out.

## Jasmine at her six-week check-up with her nurse, Maria.

Hi Jasmine! How are you and the baby doing?



We're doing good so far. I am finally starting to get some rest at night. It has been great to get some private time with her Dad.

That's great! So, have you been sexually active since your baby was born?



Well, yes, but just a few times.

Protected or unprotected?

Unprotected. I just had my baby, so I wasn't worried.

Has your period returned?



Yes.

Do you want to become pregnant again?

Oh no! I just had a baby and that is keeping me busy.

If you are not fully breastfeeding and your period has returned, you can get pregnant.



Really?

## Lynnette and Sophia talk about breastfeeding as birth control.

So how has breastfeeding been going for you?



We have our good days and bad days, but we're both learning.

One of my favorite things when I breastfed was having pregnancy protection for the first six months.



Really? We haven't gotten that far yet. I want to wait for my six-week check up before we have sex again, to make sure that everything is ok.

I waited for my postpartum appointment too. My doctor said that you have to be sure that you are breastfeeding 100% for it to work, so no formula.



That is another great reason to keep it up, even if breastfeeding gets hard.

## Breastfeeding as Birth Control.

### HERE ARE THE FACTS ABOUT BREASTFEEDING AS A BIRTH CONTROL METHOD.

- \* Breastfeeding can be used as a contraceptive, but only if:
  - You breastfeed your baby at least every four hours during the day and at least every six hours at night.
  - Your period has not come back.
  - Your baby is less than six months old.
- \* Breastfeeding is only a temporary method and once your period returns, you can get pregnant again. Start a birth control method at six months or with your first period.
- \* Start your method of birth control as soon as you start supplementing with formula or food, or if you pump milk more than once a day instead of breastfeeding.
- \* There are good birth control methods for breastfeeding women. You can use the Paragard or Mirena IUD, Nexplanon, Depo-Provera, progestin-only pills, barrier methods like the male or female condoms, and permanent methods for women or couples who don't want more children. Some breastfeeding women use methods with both estrogen and progestin once their milk supply is well established, while others find they make less milk with these methods.
- \* Talk with your health care provider to learn about your options and to make a plan that works for you.

Can I get pregnant if I'm breastfeeding?

**YES.** Breastfeeding can be used as birth control, but only if you are fully breastfeeding (about six times a day and for all night-time feedings). If you feed your baby more than one bottle of formula a day you could get pregnant. After six months or once your period returns, breastfeeding no longer works as contraception.



Can birth control protect against Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD's)?

**NO.** Condoms, when used correctly, are the only family planning method that gives STD protection.

# Getting The Most Out of Your Postpartum Appointments.

SOME PEOPLE GET SHY TALKING ABOUT SEX, BUT YOUR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER HAS PROBABLY HEARD IT ALL BEFORE! TRY THESE TIPS TO HELP YOU FEEL PREPARED FOR YOUR APPOINTMENTS:

- \* **Get ready** – Ever walk into your appointment and forget all of your questions? You’re not alone. Write down your questions and symptoms to discuss.
- \* **Prioritize** – Many health clinics are busy. Make sure you ask your most important questions first so that you don’t run out of time.
- \* **Speak your mind** – It is important that you are able to be open and honest with your health care provider. It is great if they come up with a plan, but if that plan does not fit into your lifestyle, then it won’t work for you. It is ok to tell your provider if you are not onboard with their suggestions. After all, you need to follow a plan for it to work.
- \* **Write it down** – Your provider might cover a lot of information during an appointment and it can be hard to keep it straight in your head. If you write down the important points, it will be easier to remember later.
- \* **Back up** – If your provider says something that you don’t understand or that upsets you, it is ok to stop and ask them to explain it another way until it makes sense.
- \* **It’s private** – If there is something you need to talk about, but you feel embarrassed bringing it up, try telling your provider that you need to tell them something “private.” It lets them know that you have something important to say and they need to listen.
- \* **Come prepared** – Bring your paperwork for leave from work or school so it can be signed while you are at your appointment.
- \* **Helping hands** – See if a family member, friend, or your partner can watch your baby and older kids, or come with you to the appointment. If someone can help with your baby, you’ll be able to pay close attention at your appointment.

# Sex and Relationships after a New Baby.

Couples should wait until after the six-week postpartum visit before having sex again. This way you reduce the risk of infection and you can be checked to make sure that you are comfortable and ready for sex.

## REASONS WHY HE MIGHT NOT BE READY

- \* Taking care of a new baby is hard work. It is no surprise that many couples feel very tired and this can lower your sex drive.
- \* Having a baby is a big responsibility. Many men want to be a good provider for their family. Having a new baby is expensive. Taking care of your new family can be stressful, so sex may not be on his mind.
- \* First-time dads are adjusting to their new role as father and your new role as mother. He will learn to see you both as a mother and as the woman he desired before.

## REASONS WHY SHE MIGHT NOT BE READY

- \* Many women have less interest in having sex after giving birth. It is totally normal. You may have vaginal tenderness and dryness after your delivery and that might make sex painful.
- \* New parents often feel tired because they are taking care of their baby. This can reduce anyone's sex drive.
- \* Many women get a lot of touch caring for their baby. You might need some space.
- \* Many women do not feel as sexy during the postpartum period. Your feelings about your body change, because this post-baby body is new to you.
- \* Getting used to the role of "mom" might not mix with feeling sexy at first.
- \* Baby blues, postpartum depression, and feeling very worried can all lower your interest in sex. Feeling down? Ask your health care provider for help.



# Tips for Talking About Sex with Your Partner.

It is normal for both men and women to feel differently about sex after the birth of a baby. Don't worry, you can get back on track. Talking as a couple about how you both feel is an important step to getting there. Here are some tips for communication:

- \* **Let your partner know that you want to talk about your sex life.** Find a time that you both can give it your full attention. It is hard to schedule things when you're a new parent, but making time for this conversation is worth it.
- \* **Explain your feelings to your partner.** Your feelings are important. Try to use "I feel" instead of "You make me feel" when you talk about what's going on with you.
- \* **Let your partner share their feelings honestly and listen to what they have to say.** Having trust in your relationship is an important part to being comfortable with sex again.
- \* **Try to have conversations in a neutral place.** Keeping it out of the bedroom can help to make the conversation less stressful.
- \* **Work your way back to intercourse.** It makes sense that after the birth of a child, your sex life might be different. Go slow, take your time, and make sure that you are both comfortable each step of the way. By not rushing your partner, you are showing them that you care about their feelings and your relationship.

Can I get pregnant before my period returns?

**YES.** It's hard to know after you have your baby how quickly your body will be able to become pregnant again. Your cycle could start and you would not know it. Women can get pregnant before their period starts again. Some women get pregnant as soon as three weeks after delivery. This really does happen!



## RESOURCES

### BEDSIDER.ORG

Get detailed information about contraceptive options.

### WIC

The WIC program at your local health department has many programs that can help new mothers, including breastfeeding support.

### TEXT4BABY

Get free texts about your pregnancy and your baby's development

### POSTPARTUM EDUCATION & SUPPORT

[www.pesnc.org/](http://www.pesnc.org/)

Get information about how to get help and attend local Moms Supporting Moms postpartum support groups.

### NC FAMILY PLANNING WAIVER

[www.ncdhhs.gov/dma/services/familyplanning.htm](http://www.ncdhhs.gov/dma/services/familyplanning.htm)

Both men and women can be eligible for help with the cost of certain birth control methods.

