

CONTRACEPTION AFTER CHILDBIRTH

The purpose of this notice is to provide brief information about contraceptive methods so that it would be easier to choose the most appropriate method in the future.

Pregnancy, childbirth and breastfeeding cause changes in the female hormonal levels that reduce female fertility.

The time of the first menstrual period after childbirth varies greatly. An egg may be released already before the postpartum check-up, and a new pregnancy is possible even if the woman has not had a period yet.

Breastfeeding alone is not a reliable contraceptive method, so additional contraception is recommended.

Contraceptive methods

- **Condom**
 - Reliable when breastfeeding reduces fertility at the same time
 - Easy to start using
 - Protects from sexually transmitted diseases
- **Hormonal methods**
 - Progestin products
 - Mini-pills, capsules implanted under the skin, shots
 - Low amounts are excreted into breast milk, but do not reduce milk production or affect the child's growth and development
 - Possible to start using whenever after childbirth
 - May cause light spotting, although rarely while breastfeeding
 - Can be easily switched to a combined oral contraceptive pill after breastfeeding ends
 - Combined products (oestrogen + progestin)
 - Pills, vaginal ring, contraceptive patch
 - Not recommended during the first breastfeeding months
 - Low amounts are excreted into breast milk, may reduce milk production
 - Can be considered at a later stage while breastfeeding (> 4 months) when the child also receives other nutrition/extra milk
 - After breastfeeding ends
- **Intrauterine device**
 - Copper IUD or hormonal IUD
 - Both are suitable while breastfeeding
 - Both are suitable as long-term solutions, also after breastfeeding ends
 - After childbirth, the wall of the uterus is soft and an IUD is usually not inserted until at least 12 weeks after childbirth
 - A copper IUD can cause heavier periods, especially after breastfeeding ends
 - A hormonal IUD causes lighter periods or they may stop completely
- **Sterilisation**
 - Reliable, long-term contraceptive method
 - Is practically irreversible, so the decision must be carefully considered
 - Can be done for both men and women

Emergency contraceptive pills are also safe to use while breastfeeding, but they are not an option for regular contraception.