

Planning Your Family

SESSION 6: LAM—LACTATIONAL AMENORRHEA METHOD¹

OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this session, participants will have:

1. Named the three requirements for LAM to be an effective means of birth spacing.
2. Practiced application of LAM requirements.
3. Determined which benefit of LAM is most important to them.

TIME:

30 minutes

METHODS

Presentation, group discussion, practical case studies

PREPARATION/MATERIALS:

1. Method cards for the Family Planning Effectiveness Chart
2. Illustrations of three requirements for LAM
3. Practice telling the four case studies

STEPS

1. Review Effectiveness Chart from Previous Session – 3 minutes

Review the previous session by giving volunteers the method cards and asking them to reconstruct the Family Planning Effectiveness Chart for local methods as commonly used.

Family Planning Methods Effectiveness Chart			
Very Effective Few women get pregnant	Effective Some women get pregnant	Less Effective Many women get pregnant	Not Effective Better than nothing at all
Sterilization Depo-Provera IUD	LAM The Pill	Condom Fertility Awareness— ▪ Rhythm Method ▪ Mucus Method	Withdrawal Local Herbs Douches

Ask the group to adjust the placement of the cards until they are correct.

Ask for and respond to comments and questions.

¹ Special thanks to Dr. Rolando Figueroa of the Academy for Educational Development, LINKAGES project for his contributions to the LAM learning session.

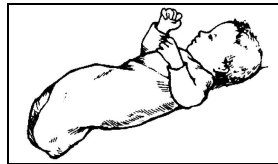
2. Presentation of LAM Requirements with Illustrations – 5 minutes

Present the following information about LAM. Show the appropriate illustration as you present each point.

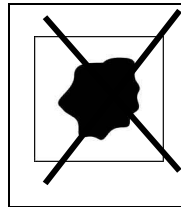
How to Use LAM for Effective Birth Spacing

The Lactational Amenorrhea Method (LAM) is a modern contraception method based on the natural infertility resulting from breastfeeding. To use LAM, all three of the following conditions must be true:

1. Your baby is less than 6 months old.



2. You have had no monthly bleeding since giving birth.



3. You are
 - Giving your baby only breastmilk. Waters, liquids or foods are not regularly offered and
 - Breastfeeding him/her whenever he/she is hungry—with no more than 6 hours between feedings—day and night.



Use another effective method of family planning that is safe with breastfeeding as soon as any of the following things happen:

- Your baby is more than 6 months old, or
- Your monthly bleeding starts, or
- Your baby starts drinking other kinds of liquids or eating other foods, or starts sleeping for more than 6 hours during the night, or
- You must be away from the baby for more than 6 hours and cannot remove milk from your breasts during that time.

Ask for and respond to questions or comments.

Use the illustrations as “flash” cards to quiz the group until the members can easily recall all three LAM requirements.

- Baby is less than 6 months old and
- No monthly bleeding and
- Only feeding breastmilk—day and night.

Post the illustrations of the three requirements for using LAM.

3. Game of “Who Can Rely on LAM?” - 15 minutes

Announce a game with the following instructions:

Frequently, there are reports of women who say that LAM does not work because they got pregnant while breastfeeding their babies. It is important to understand the difference between breastfeeding and LAM. Breastfeeding is a method of infant feeding—NOT a contraceptive method. LAM is a method of contraception that you make a decision to use. Form into small groups of 3–4 persons. Listen to the following stories of women who have decided to use LAM. Determine if the women can rely on LAM for family planning.

Read each story. Give the participants a few moments to discuss each story with their neighbors. Then ask for a volunteer to explain:

Can she rely on LAM to protect her from getting pregnant, and why do you think so?

Discuss the answer.

Case Studies to Identify Who Can Rely on LAM for Protection from Pregnancy

Case 1: *Mary has a 3-month-old baby whom breastfeeds exclusively. Mary has been bleeding for three days. Can Mary rely on LAM to protect her from getting pregnant? Why or why not?*

[No—Her bleeding has started.]

Case 2: *Ruth has a 3-month-old baby. Her bleeding has not started again. She gives the baby only breastmilk and no other foods. She is very busy so she can rarely feed her baby on demand. She gives the baby the breast for a few minutes each time. Her breast never feels “empty.” Can Ruth rely on LAM to prevent her from getting pregnant? Why or why not?*

[No—Ruth must breastfeed so her baby on demand. At three months, she should be feeding 6-8 times a day or more until her breast empties completely. This may take about 20 or more minutes.]

Case Studies to Identify Who Can Rely on LAM for Protection from Pregnancy
(Continued)

Case 3: *Hannah has a 5½-month-old baby and her bleeding has not started. She does laundry outside her home for three hours each day and leaves the baby with her mother. She gives the baby only breastmilk and does not give the baby, or let her mother give, other liquids or foods. Can Hannah rely on LAM to protect her from getting pregnant? Why or why not?*

[Yes—All three requirements are met.]

Case 4: *Anna has a 2-month-old baby, and has not begun bleeding again. She feeds her baby breastmilk, but also regularly gives the baby water or juice when he is thirsty and sometimes thin soup. Can Anna rely on LAM to protect her from getting pregnant? Why or why not?*

[No—The mother is regularly feeding the baby liquids other than breastmilk. Anna should be helped to understand that the baby does not need water or any other liquids or food at this time.]

After reviewing all the cases, highlight that most of the women in the stories were not using LAM properly. Ask:

What should these mothers do to protect their health? [Use an alternate method of birth spacing.]

Explain that in the next sessions there is information about which methods are safe for breastfeeding mothers.

4. Determine the Important Benefits of LAM to Mother and Family - 5 minutes

Give the following instructions:

Listen to the benefits for using LAM given by breastfeeding and family planning experts. Decide which of these benefits are important for you.

Benefits of LAM

Benefits of using LAM.

Mother—The mother benefits from using LAM because it

- is effective for up to 6 months;
- can be started immediately after birth;
- has no side effects;
- motivates the mother to breastfeed exclusively;
- requires no medical devices; and
- gives time to decide on the next family planning method to use.

Family—The family benefits from LAM because it

- provides immediate and no-cost protection for family planning;
- does not interfere with having sexual intercourse;
- results in the economic benefits of birth spacing and maternal/child well-being; and
- does not depend on the woman having to disclose the family planning method to her husband.

Give instructions for a paired discussion:

Turn to someone near you and decide which of these benefits are important to you.

After 1-2 minutes, ask several volunteers to report on their group discussion. Ask other groups to comment. Acknowledge all contributions as important.

5. Give a Take-Home Assignment – 2 minutes

Use the “flash” cards and quickly review the three requirements for LAM. Ask the group:

What are the three requirements for using LAM properly?

Hold up the “flash” card for each requirement as it is named. Continue the review until the responses come quickly and easily from the whole group.

Give the take-home assignment.

The take-home assignment is to tell your spouse or selected couple the three requirements for LAM. Then discuss how a new mother might be helped if she decides to use LAM to protect her from getting pregnant.