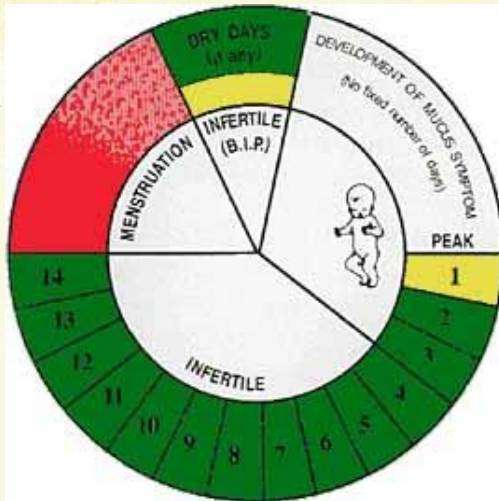


# Sexuality in Postpartum

Sex and family planning.



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## Preventing Pregnancy

Families may be interested in several different types of contraception or methods of natural family planning. Your midwife may provide you with services and recommendations on all methods except hormonal and surgical methods. Some families would like to become educated on the hormonal cycle so that they may work with the body naturally to prevent or encourage pregnancy. This is referred to as Natural Family Planning. Ask your midwife about local instructors or books on the subject.

## Pregnancy Prevention Methods:

- Abstinence
- NFP methods:
  - Creighton
  - Billings
  - LAM
  - Withdrawal
  - Chance
  - Outercourse
  - Lens-Fertility Magnifier
- Artificial methods:
  - Condoms
  - Spermicide
  - Cervical caps
  - Diaphragms
  - VCF
- Hormonal methods:
  - Oral contraception
  - IUD
  - Depo
  - Norplant
- Surgical (permanent) methods:
  - Tubal ligation
  - Vasectomy

*Artificial, hormonal and surgical methods are associated with side-effects ranging from mild to severe.*

*Your midwife is happy to discuss any and all of these options with you.*

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# SEX

## Consider Before You Begin:

- ✓ Tricky and emotionally charged
- ✓ No one right answer for when to resume
- ✓ Any pelvic or vaginal pain and swelling
- ✓ Are lacerations healed?
- ✓ Feeling unready to try
- ✓ Might need to adapt positions
- ✓ Birth control has been discussed and agreed upon
- ✓ Get creative in the meantime – consider other means of sexual activity besides intercourse
- ✓ Counselling - Sex therapy
- ✓ Physical Therapy
- ✓ PPD: Offer simple affection and physical comfort, but be patient if your partner is not up for sex. Low sex drive is normal with depression, and rest and recovery will help to bring it back.



*Your midwife can help you decide when it's a good time to resume intercourse. She can provide you with a pelvic exam to determine the state of your tissues and assess any lacerations (tears) that are healing. However, YOU are the best judge of whether or not you and your body are ready to engage in intercourse. Communicate your needs and desires with your partner so they can understand your healing process and concerns.*

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- Lim, R. (2001). *After the baby's birth: A complete guide for postpartum women*. Berkeley, CA: Celestial Arts.
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Get creative with intimacy and sex as your partner continues to heal and recover after birth. Patience, gentleness and compromise will strengthen your relationship in the bedroom.

“Sex can be an emotionally and physically challenging situation after giving birth. In this matter, as in so many others surrounding pregnancy and parenting, there is no one right answer about when is the best time to resume sexual activity. By six weeks, most clients are cleared by their midwives to be physically able to resume sexual activity, but that does not mean that every person will feel physically or emotionally ready to have sex by that time. Keep in mind that you may need to adapt your activities because of the physical and lifestyle changes you have undergone.”

- Excerpted from Following the Birth,  
by Plumtree Baby