

Pregnancy and planning

It can happen again too soon

You can get pregnant as little as three weeks after the birth of a baby, even if you're breastfeeding and your periods haven't started again. Contraception may be the last thing on your mind when you have just had a baby, but it is something you need to think about if you want to delay or avoid another pregnancy. Many unplanned pregnancies happen in the first few months after having a baby. If you had your baby in hospital, you will probably have discussed contraception with a family planning advisor before being discharged home.

You'll also be asked about contraception at your six to eight week postnatal check, but you can discuss it at any time with your health visitor, midwife, GP or local family planning clinic.

If you are breastfeeding, the combined pill, vaginal ring and contraceptive patch may affect your milk supply and you are usually advised to wait until the baby is six months old. These methods contain oestrogen which may reduce the milk flow.

You can usually have a contraceptive injection or start using a diaphragm or cap around six weeks after giving birth or condoms. If you used a diaphragm or cap before becoming pregnant, see your GP or family planning clinic after the birth to ensure that it still fits correctly.

You can talk with your health visitor or GP if you need some more help or get advice on contraception from the local family planning service.

<http://sexualhealth.cht.nhs.uk/think-sexual-health/>

We don't want another baby for some time

If you don't want to get pregnant again for some time you might want to try using a long-acting reversible contraceptive (the contraceptive injection, the IUD, the IUS). These methods are very effective. You don't need to remember to take or use them.

Thinking of having another baby?

If you are planning a pregnancy it's never too early to start taking folic acid and vitamin D. It is the best time to make other lifestyle changes such as stopping smoking, stopping drinking alcohol, eating a healthy diet and being more active.

There are support services that can help you make lifestyle changes. Smoking during pregnancy can cause problems for you baby. Yorkshire Smokefree Calderdale can help you to quit smoking and offers specialist support for pregnant ladies. Call 0800 612001

www.yorkshiresmokefree.co.uk

If you have a body mass index (BMI) of 27.5 or above www.nhs.uk/Livewell/loseweight/Pages/BodyMassIndex.aspx the Better Living Team in Calderdale can help you create a healthier lifestyle. They offer a 'Better Living Mums' pre-natal course and post-natal support and exercise classes for mums wanting to lose weight. Call 01422 230230

1

I have just had a baby and I am breastfeeding, so do I need to use contraception?

2

It's important to use some kind of contraception every time you have sex after giving birth.

3

You ovulate (release an egg) about two weeks before your first period after the baby arrives, so your fertility may have returned before you realise it.