



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Pregnancy Planning

Revised Recommendations for the Use of Contraceptives Methods During the Postpartum Period

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[Announcer] This podcast is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC — safer, healthier people.

[Dr. Gaynes] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the *MMWR*, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm your host, Dr. Robert Gaynes.

Some women dream of having a large family with a house full of children, but getting pregnant again soon after giving birth can be risky for both the expectant mother and her unborn child.

Dr. Naomi Tepper is an OB/GYN physician with CDC's Division of Reproductive Health. She's joining us today to discuss the importance of spacing out pregnancies and selecting the appropriate form of birth control immediately after giving birth. Welcome to the show, Naomi.

[Dr. Tepper] Thank you for having me.

[Dr. Gaynes] Naomi, how long should a woman wait to become pregnant again after delivering a baby?

[Dr. Tepper] It's very important for woman to wait after they have a baby before getting pregnant again. The experts generally say they should wait somewhere between 18 and 24 months to become pregnant again. It's also important for women to talk to their health care providers about their specific conditions and how long they might need to wait.

[Dr. Gaynes] If a woman becomes pregnant again shortly after giving birth, what are the potential health risks for her and her baby?

[Dr. Tepper] One concern is that a woman can be anemic if she has a pregnancy too soon. Even healthy women can be anemic after having a baby and if they become pregnant too quickly, they can have worse anemia in the next pregnancy. Another concern is if women have a caesarean section and they get pregnant too quickly, they can experience a uterine rupture. For the baby, there are risks like low birthweight or preterm birth, which is being born too early.

[Dr. Gaynes] When can a woman begin using birth control after delivering a baby?

[Dr. Tepper] A woman can begin birth control immediately after having a baby.

[Dr. Gaynes] What forms of birth control are safe and effective immediately after delivery?

[Dr. Tepper] There are several kinds of birth control that are safe for women right after they have a baby. They should talk with their health care providers about what methods are safe. Some examples of safe methods of birth control that women can use right after they have a baby are

things like pills, injections, or implants which have only one type of hormone – progestin. Other examples are things like intrauterine devices, or IUDs, which can last for five or ten years.

[Dr. Gaynes] What forms of birth control aren't safe for a woman who's recently given birth?

[Dr. Tepper] Women who have just had a baby are at a higher risk for forming blood clots. There is a concern that if women use birth control methods containing estrogen, that that will increase their risk of forming a blood clot. Examples of methods that have estrogen in them are things like the patch, the ring, and certain kinds of birth control pills. This is why we do not recommend that women that have just had a baby use birth control methods containing estrogen.

[Dr. Gaynes] Naomi, where can listeners get more information about pregnancy planning?

[Dr. Tepper] Listeners can go to www.cdc.gov and in the search box, type “unintended pregnancy.”

[Dr. Gaynes] Thanks, Naomi. I've been talking today with CDC's Dr. Naomi Tepper about the importance spacing out pregnancies and selecting appropriate birth control methods immediately after delivering a baby.

While contraceptives are the most effective way to prevent an unintended pregnancy, not all forms of birth control are safe for use immediately after having a baby. Women who have just given birth should consult with their health care provider about the safest and most effective form of birth control for their situation.

Until next time, be well. This is Dr. Robert Gaynes for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO, 24/7.