



BIRTH SPACING

What is BIRTH SPACING?

Birth Spacing is the practice of waiting between pregnancies. Following pregnancy, a woman's body needs to rest. Women should wait at least 18 months before getting pregnant again. The 18-month rest period is called "birth spacing." When the time between pregnancies is less than 18 months, her body may not be ready to have a healthy baby.

Why is BIRTH SPACING important?

When a woman does not wait at least 18 months between pregnancies, there is an increased risk of having a poor birth outcome (such as a premature birth or a low birth weight baby). These conditions can threaten the health of the child and the mother. The risks of getting pregnant too soon include [prematurity](#) and other poor birth outcomes that may lead to infant mortality. These conditions are also associated with other short-term and long-term health complications.

How can healthy BIRTH SPACING be accomplished?

[Unplanned pregnancy](#) is a major barrier to birth spacing. Families should learn their options to prevent unexpected pregnancy by contacting their doctor or speaking with a professional. Dial 2-1-1 to connect to [HelpMeGrow](#), a program for families looking for the right resources.

How are contraceptive methods chosen for BIRTH SPACING?

Medical professionals are trained to assist women and men in assessing which contraceptive methods may be medically advisable. Important factors in choosing a contraceptive method are a woman's health status (including high blood pressure, cholesterol, diabetes, anemia, or other conditions), body mass index, and habits such as smoking. These same factors are also important to address when choosing to get pregnant.

What are some community resources that support BIRTH SPACING?

There are other programs that can help a woman get ready for before, during, and after pregnancy. Research has shown that [home visiting](#) is one of the most effective programs that encourages spacing between pregnancies. Providers can learn more information about home visiting with [the Home Visiting Provider Briefing](#) at [dethrives.com/](#), where they can also order free materials to suggest home visiting.