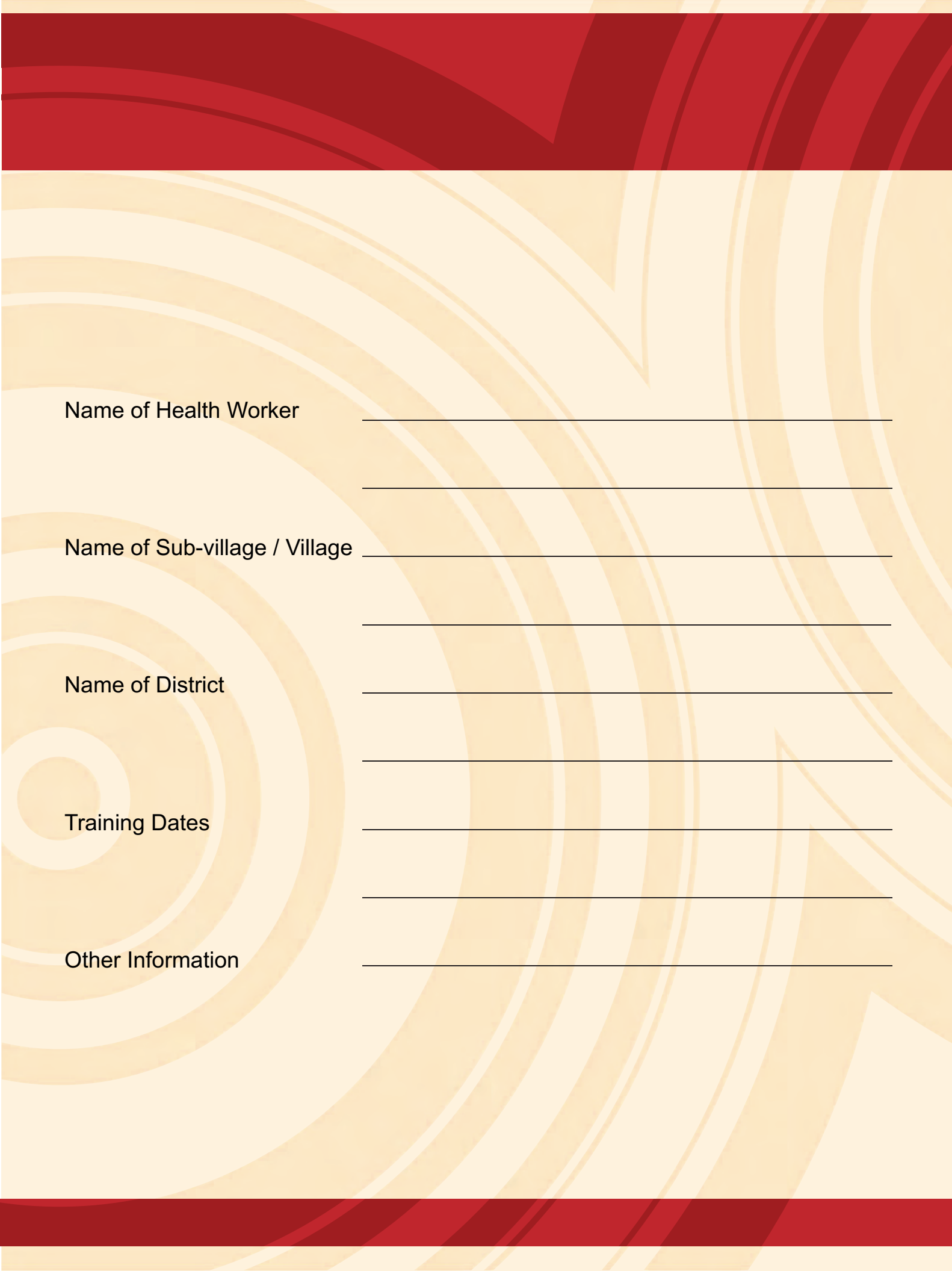




## **Spread the Word, Increase the Knowledge of Natural Family Planning**

Come, Learn about New Methods of Family Planning  
“Mala Chakra (Standard Days Method) and  
Lactational Amenorrhea Method (LAM) method”



Name of Health Worker

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Name of Sub-village / Village

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Name of District

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Training Dates

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Other Information

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A healthy family begins with a healthy mother, and family planning plays an important role in healthy motherhood.

One mother out of three can be saved by following family planning. If a woman uses family planning - the first pregnancy is at the right age (after 18 years old), she is able to space her pregnancies (3-5 years) and able to avoid unplanned pregnancy and miscarriage, the maternal mortality rate can significantly decrease.

When a woman uses a family planning method after delivery and delays her next pregnancy, the infant and child mortality rate will decrease significantly.

There are many methods of family planning, such as contraceptive pills, condoms, Copper T, male sterilization and female sterilization. Along with these methods, two new methods are being introduced. These are the mala chakra (SDM) method and the LAM method. The woman or couple decide which family planning method is right for them based on preference, necessity, choice, or situation.

The mala chakra and LAM method were developed by the Institute for Reproductive Health (IRH), Georgetown University in collaboration with USAID. Both methods are recognized as being modern and scientifically based.

These methods are being made available through governmental and non-governmental programs for people in the community in India and many other countries.

In the Jharkhand state of India through the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, these methods are being made available to the common man. In this effort, USAID, IRH, along with other institutions, and citizens are collaborating together in this effort.

March 2009

# Comic Booklet Introduction

The subject of the comic training booklet is based on the mala chakra and LAM methods:

The mala chakra method and LAM method training booklet is an easy and colorful comic for the health worker.

This comic booklet will help to create awareness and disseminate knowledge of these methods in the community and determine which woman and couples should follow the mala chakra method and LAM method. This comic booklet will help teach and explain to the client the key information about both of these methods. This comic booklet is an easy way for the health and social worker to counsel on these two methods.

There are different situations in this booklet; it has information to understand these situations and advice and counseling depending on these situations.

## **Part 1: Consultations for the Mala Chakra Method ..... (Page 1-6)**

The health worker tries to determine whether the mala chakra method is useful or not for Rekha, and she explains the right way to use the method

## **Part 2: Cooperation between the Couple to Use the Mala Chakra Method ..... (Page 7-9)**

.Ms. Asha helps Saroj to get her husband's cooperation in using the mala chakra method.

## **Part 3: Consultation to Use the Mala Chakra Method for a Breastfeeding Woman ..... (Page 10-11)**

A few months ago Lata gave birth, and she wants to use the mala chakra method. The health worker has given her information and counseling.

## **Part 4: Consultation for a Woman Who Is Using Contraceptive Pills as Family Planning Method ..... (Page 12-13)**

Vimala, who recently was using contraceptive pills, now wants to use the mala chakra method. She goes to see the health worker.

## **Part 5: Follow Up for the Woman Who Is Already Using the Mala Chakra Method ..... (Page 14-18)**

Sunita has been using the mala chakra method for one month. In a follow up meeting, the health worker tries to determine if the couple is using the method correctly.

## **Part 6: LAM Method: Natural Contraceptive Method for Breastfeeding Women ..... (Page 19-22)**

The health worker explains to Shyama how to use the LAM method and its advantages.  
Shyama gave birth a few days ago.



## Part 1: Consultations for the Mala Chakra Method



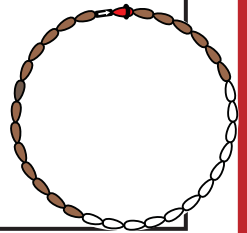
Some months after marriage, Rekha goes to visit the village health worker Ms. Asha for information about family planning methods. Rekha and her husband do not want a baby now.



First they tried a condom, and now they want to know more about the natural method. After learning about the Copper-T, contraceptive pills and condom, they decided to try the mala chakra method.

"Sister, I want to try the mala chakra. Please give me information about it."

"Sure. Mala chakra is a string of beads. These beads can help a woman determine when she can become pregnant. The mala chakra is one natural, easy and effective method. There are no side effects on the body."



"To use the mala chakra method, move the black band one bead each day. During the days when a woman can become pregnant, the couple can use a condom or abstinence."

The arrow on the black bead shows the direction to move forward.



The red bead shows the first day of menstruation.



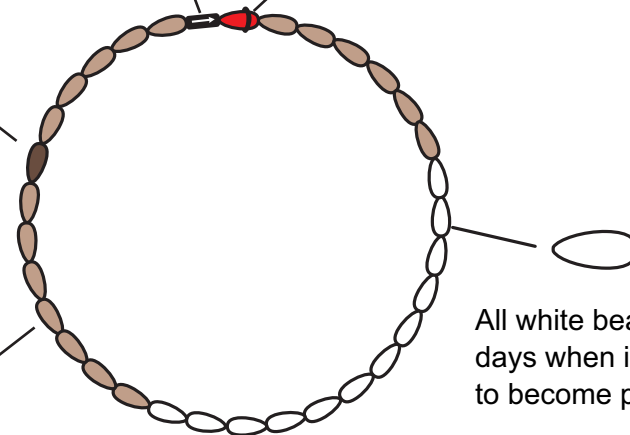
The dark brown bead indicates if menstruation is early.

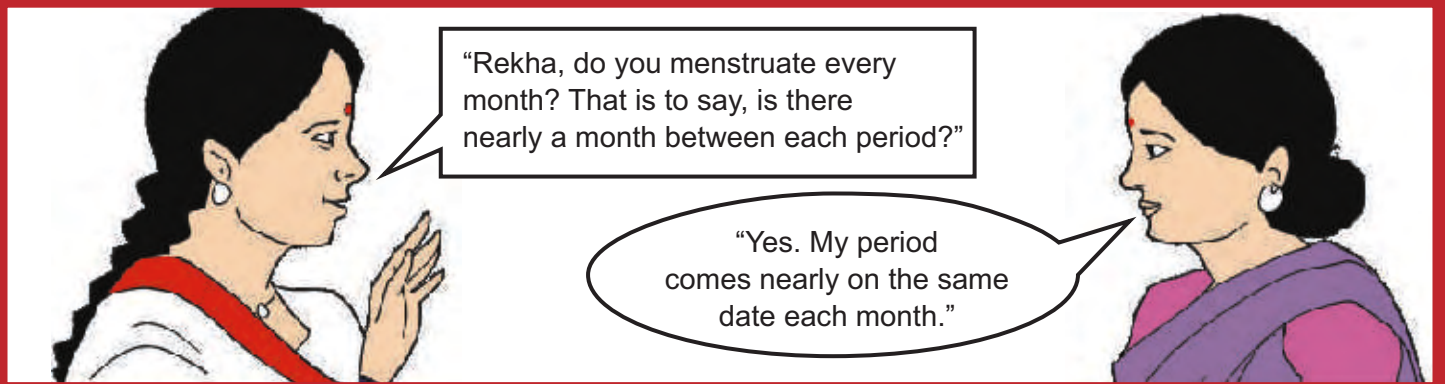
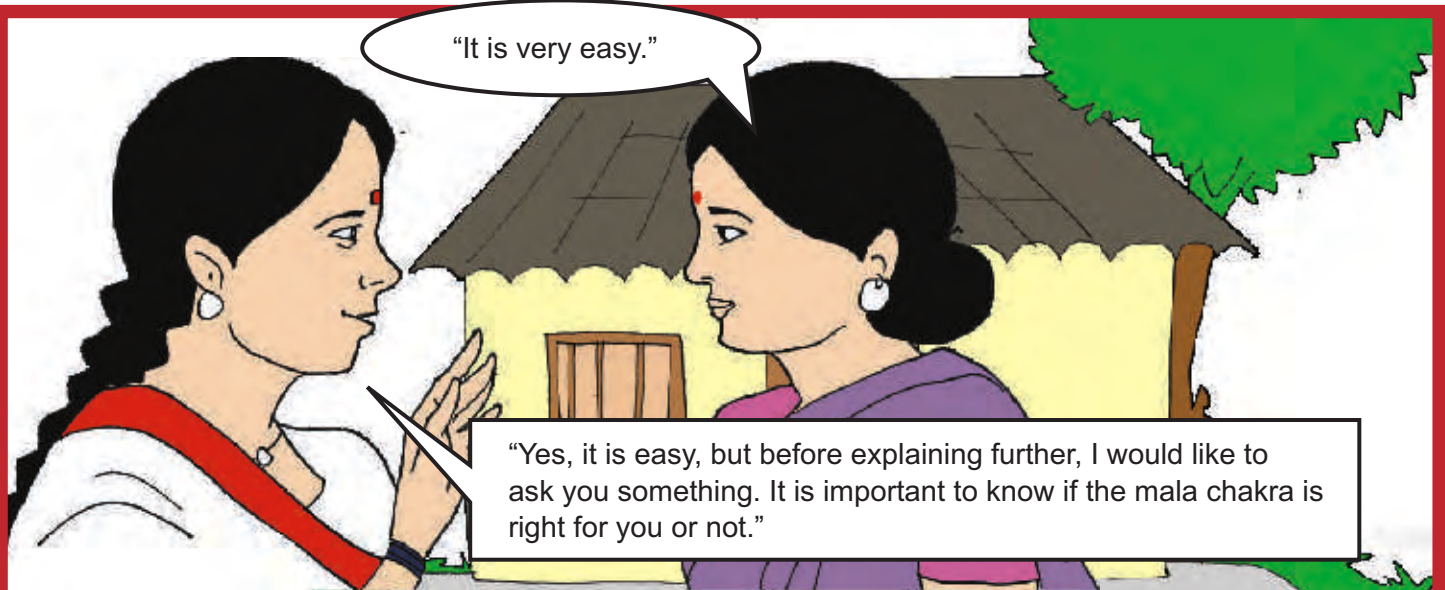


Every brown bead points to the days when it is not likely to become pregnant



All white beads point to the days when it is more likely to become pregnant.







"It seems to me that this method will be right for you because there is a difference of one month between your two periods and your husband Ramesh is willing use condoms to avoid pregnancy."

"Yes Sister."

### Rekha can try the mala chakra method:

- ✓ There is one month difference between her periods.
- ✓ On pregnancy days Rekha and her husband will use condoms.

### How to Use the Mala Chakra



On the first day of menstruation move the black band from the arrow to the red bead.



Mark the date on the calendar.



Each day move the black band to the next bead. Even on those days when menstruation is flowing.



On the days that the black band is on the white colored beads, abstain or use a condom. Those are the days when pregnancy is likely.



On the days that the black band is on a brown colored bead, sex can be performed without a condom. On those days pregnancy is not likely.



On the first day of your next period skip over the remaining brown beads and move the black band to the red bead. If some beads remain then leave them.

"Let's carefully see how to use the mala chakra."



"Now let's practice. Here I am like your husband Ramesh. Can you explain this method to Ramesh?"

"Good ... On the day I start menstruation, I move the black band onto the red bead and in the calendar I make a circle on that day."

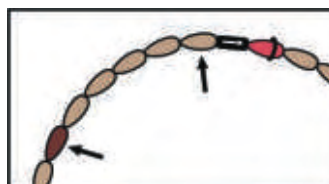


"Pay attention to the dark brown bead."

"I see! What is the difference?"



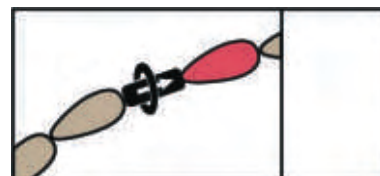
The dark brown bead is very important because your menstruation should occur between this dark brown bead and the last brown bead.



If your period starts before you reach the dark brown bead then that means your period was early.

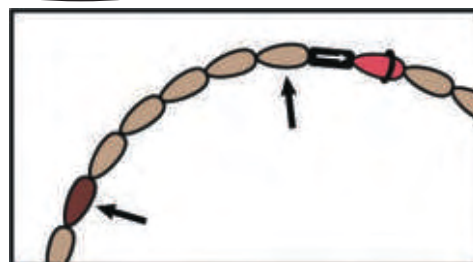


If your menstruation starts after reaching the last brown bead then that means your menstruation came late.



If this happens, you should come to meet me for sure. If it happens more than once a year, then the method will not be right for you.

"Yes I understand. My period should start between them."





"Yes, Rekha, when did you say your last period started?"

"Today is the fourth day of my period."

"Good Rekha. You can use the mala chakra method now. Move the black band onto the correct bead and circle the date of your period on the calendar."



"On the calendar, you must circle the day when your period starts. Looking at the calendar, count how many days from the start of your period to the present day. Then on the mala chakra start counting the beads from the red bead and move the black band."

"Do you have any questions?"



"I understand everything. Thank you!"

"Remember that you and your husband Ramesh should abstain or use a condom on the white bead days. Tell Ramesh about this so that you are both in agreement."

If you have any trouble in using this method, definitely come see me:

- If you ever feel that you are pregnant,
- You have unprotected sex on a white bead day, or
- Your period is early or came late.



## Main Points

The health worker has helped Rekha and her husband Ramesh to determine if the mala chakra method is the right method for them or not. The health worker had some questions for them:

- ✓ Do the woman's periods come about a month apart? And,
- ✓ Will the woman and her husband be able to abstain from sex or use condoms on the white bead days?

The health worker explains what the various colors of the mala chakra beads represent and how to correctly use the mala chakra.

She explains about the dark brown bead and she said that to continue using the mala chakra method, menstruation must start between the thick brown bead and the last brown bead.





## Part 2: Cooperation between the Couple in Using the Mala Chakra Method



Saroj wants to use the mala chakra method. Ms. Asha explains the use of the mala chakra method to her. Saroj's period comes every month, and there is a difference of about one month between two periods. Saroj is unsure whether on white bead days, she and her husband will be able to abstain from sex or use a condom. To help Saroj, Sister Asha asks her some questions.

"For the mala chakra method to be effective the husband must be willing to abstain or use condoms during the days that pregnancy is possible. What do you think your husband will do?"

"Right now we both do not want a baby and want to use a type of natural method. On white bead or pregnancy days, I'm not sure what we would do right now."



"We can discuss a little more about it. Don't worry; this discussion is confidential between you and me."

"Yes Sister. It's ok."

"Tell me what you think you and your husband will decide about having sex during the pregnancy days."

"We've used condoms before but only sometimes."

"Our marriage was less than one year ago, so we do not often abstain from sex."







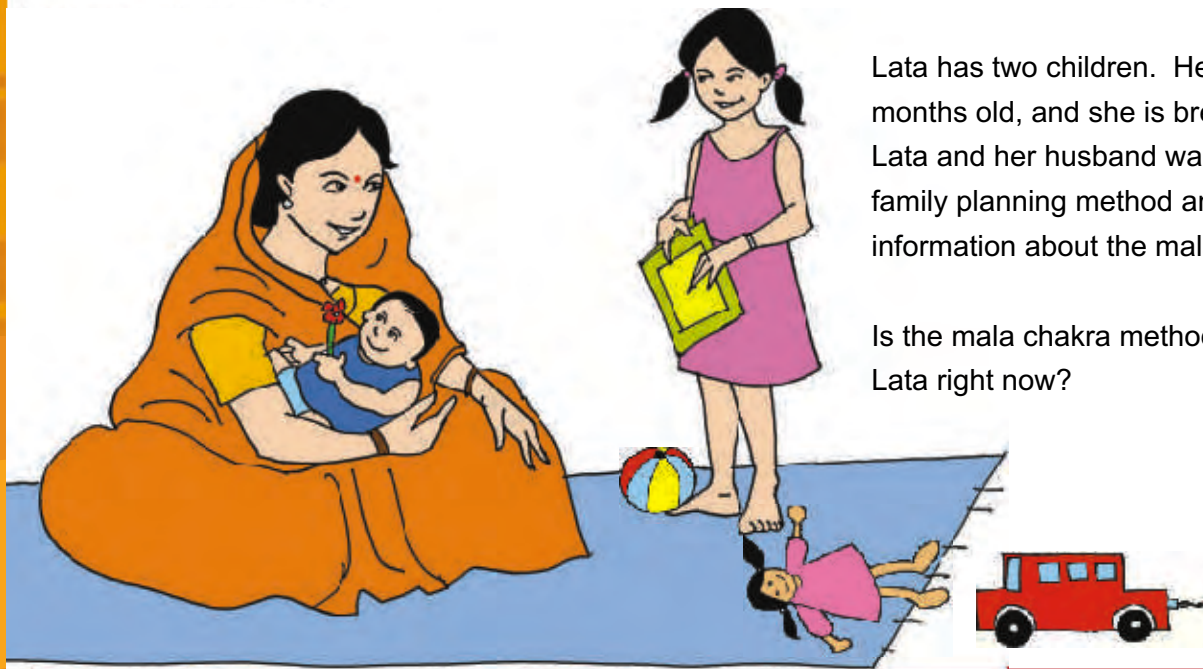


## Main Points

Ms. Asha asked some questions and determined whether the mala chakra method was appropriate or not for Saroj and her husband. Ms. Asha has helped Saroj understand if she can help her husband decide what to do on the pregnancy days. The following suggestions can be given for using the mala chakra method:

- Discuss the method with your husband in your free time.
- Discuss with your husband abstinence and the use of condoms during the white bead or pregnancy days
- Keep the mala chakra in such a place where both of you can see it.
- A health worker or Ms. Asha can meet the husband separately or also as a couple.

### Part 3: Consultation on Using the Mala Chakra Method for a Breastfeeding Woman

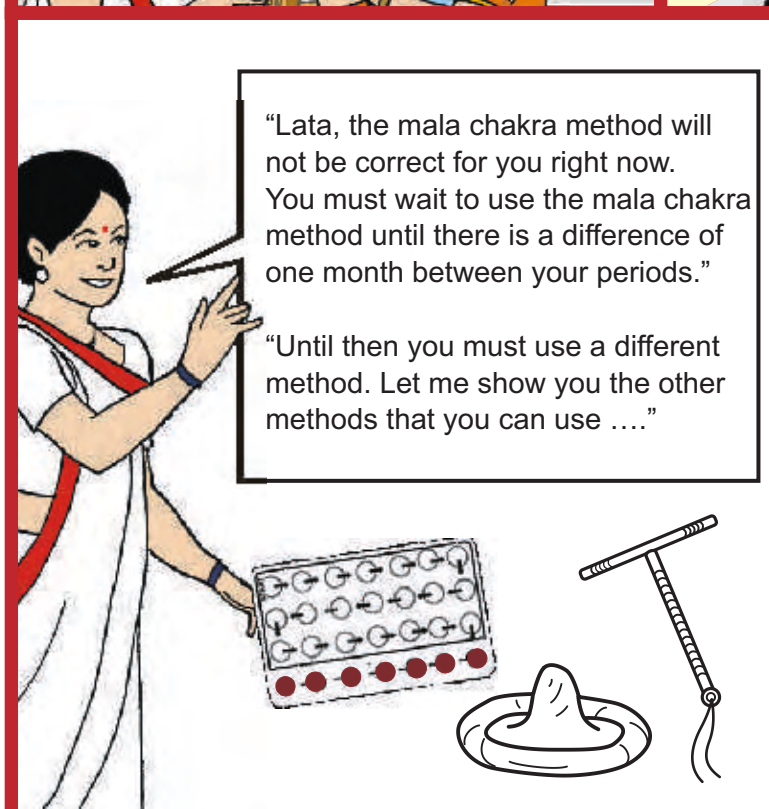
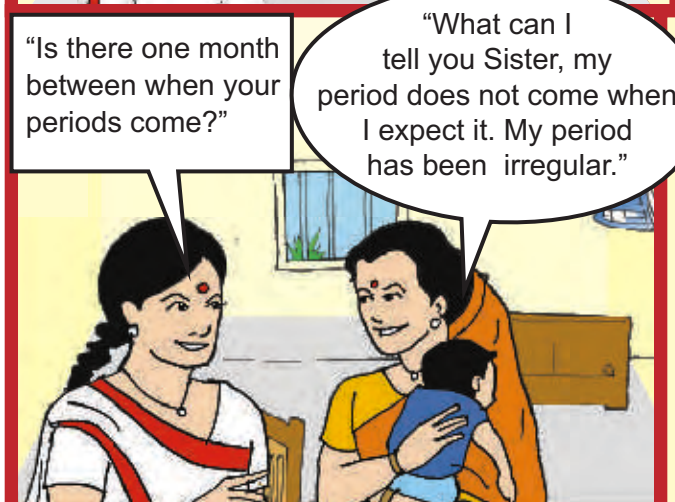


Lata has two children. Her little son is 8 months old, and she is breastfeeding him. Lata and her husband want to try any natural family planning method and want more information about the mala chakra method.

Is the mala chakra method right for Lata right now?







## Main Points

The health worker explained to Lata why the mala chakra would not work for her right now.

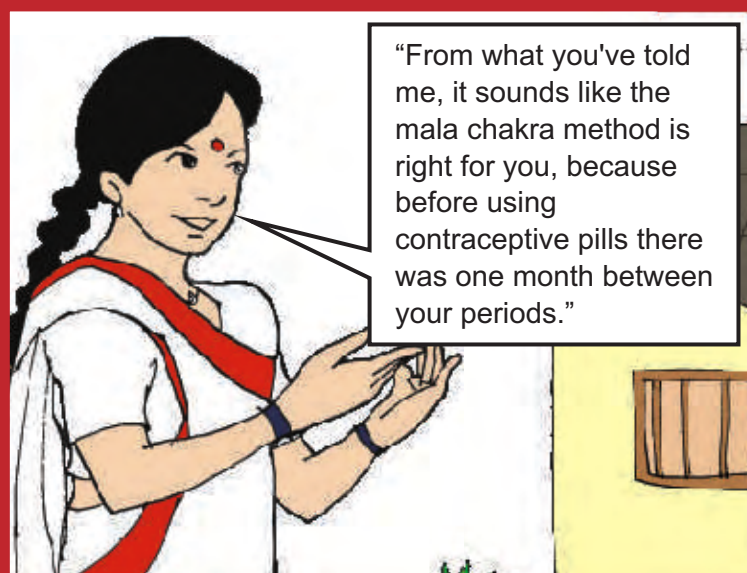
In order to use the mala chakra method, breastfeeding women:

- ✓ Must have had at least 4 periods after childbirth, and
- ✓ Two most recent periods must be about a month apart.

## Part 4: Consultation for a Woman Who Is Using Contraceptive Pills as a Family Planning Method



Vimala lives in a small village. Until recently she was taking contraceptive pills. Now she wants to try any natural method for family planning. Someone told her about the mala chakra method. She told her husband about it, and both of them would like to know more about the method. The next day she went to the village health worker ....



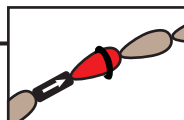


"Good, it is more than one week so now these are your pregnancy days. If you had unprotected sex, you could be pregnant."

"We were cautious."

"Because you don't remember the date of your last period you will have to wait until the start of your next period to try the mala chakra method. Let's see how this method works ...."

"Until your period comes use both condoms and abstinence. When your period starts move the black band to the red bead. Come, now let's see how this method works."



The health worker continues to counsel Vimla on how to use the mala chakra . . .

## Main Points

After asking a few questions, the health worker decides that the mala chakra method is good for Vimla.

- ✓ For those women who have until recently been using contraceptive pills, they must have stopped taking the pill and wait for 3 consecutive periods about a month apart.
- ✓ If she remembers the date of the start of her last period, then she can begin to use the mala right away.
- ✓ If she can't remember the date of her last period, she has to wait until the start of her next period to use the mala chakra.


## Part 5: Follow Up for the Woman Who Is Already Using the Mala Chakra Method



Ms. Asha goes to meet Sunita in her home. Sunita has been using the mala chakra method for almost a month.

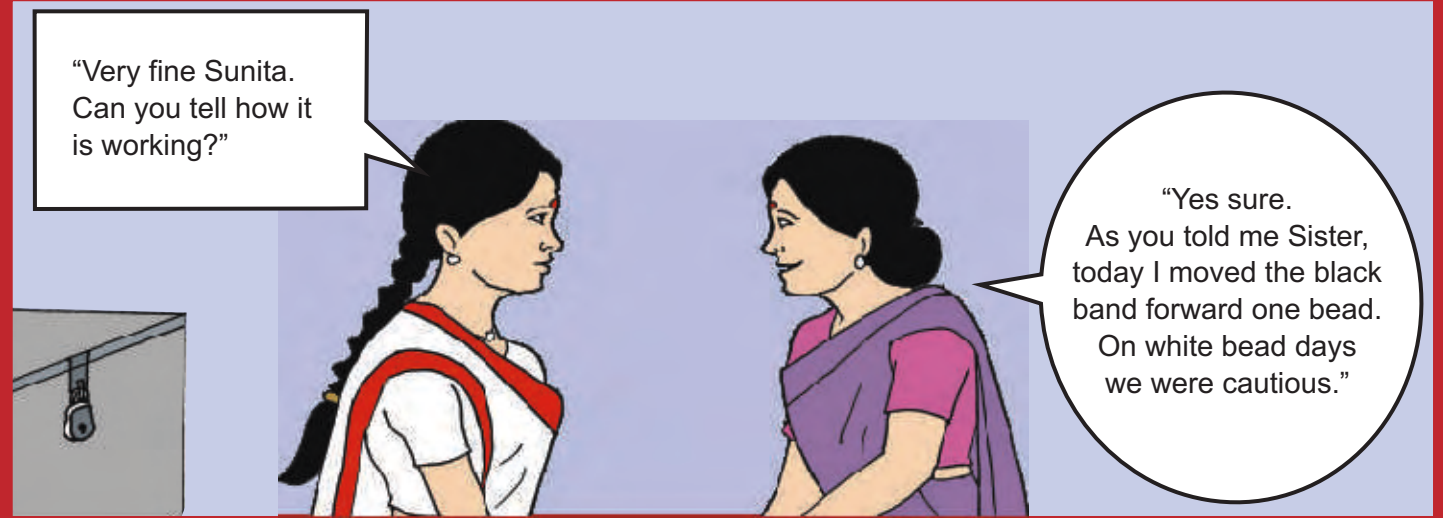






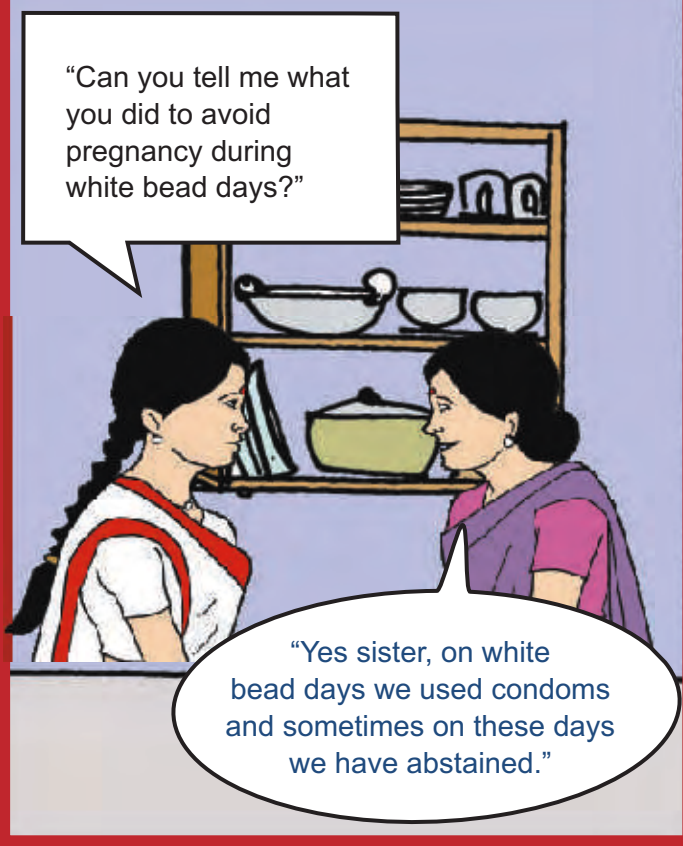
"Did you have a discussion with your husband about the mala chakra method?"

"Yes Sister, I have shown him the mala chakra and also this booklet which describes the method in detail."



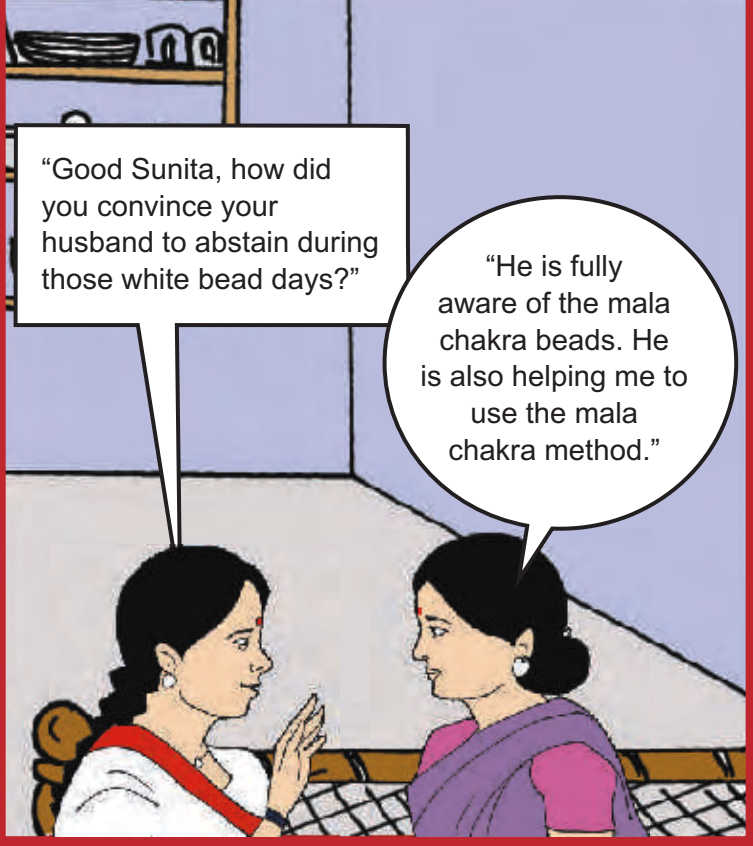
"Very fine Sunita. Can you tell how it is working?"

"Yes sure. As you told me Sister, today I moved the black band forward one bead. On white bead days we were cautious."



"Can you tell me what you did to avoid pregnancy during white bead days?"

"Yes sister, on white bead days we used condoms and sometimes on these days we have abstained."



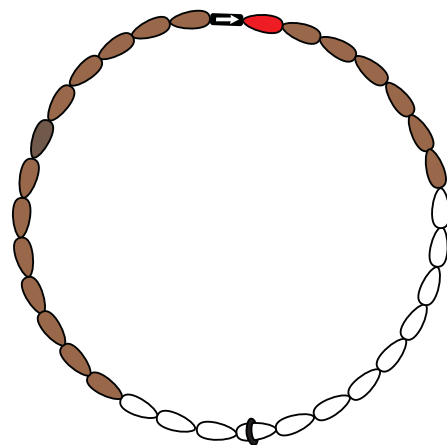
"Good Sunita, how did you convince your husband to abstain during those white bead days?"

"He is fully aware of the mala chakra beads. He is also helping me to use the mala chakra method."

"Can you show me your mala chakra and calendar?"

Did you mark on your calendar the start of your period and move the black band forward?"

"I circled October 14 on the calendar when my period began."



"Very good. Today is October 29 and you moved the black band on the right bead."

"When are you expecting your next period?"

"Next month during these days."

"Sunita you have learned very well how to use the mala chakra method. It seems that this method is right for you. Now explain how to use it to me again."





## How to Use the Mala Chakra

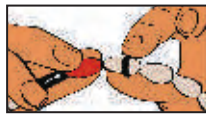
On the first day of menstruation move the black band to the red bead.



Mark the date on the calendar.



Each day move the black band to the next bead. Even on those days when menstruation is flowing.



On the days that the black band is on the white colored beads, abstain or use a condom. Those are the days when pregnancy is likely.



On the days that the black band is on a brown colored bead, sex can be performed without a condom. Those days pregnancy is not likely.



On the first day of your next period, skip over the remaining brown beads and move the black band to the red bead.



Very Good Sunita, remember that if your period ever comes before the black band reaches the thick brown bead or comes after the band reaches the last brown bead then you must come see me.

If in a year your period comes early or late more than one time then that means that the mala chakra method is not effective for you right now.

I am very happy that you and your husband liked the mala chakra method and that both of you are able to use it well. If you ever have a need then you can certainly come see me.



## Main Points

1. Ms. Asha gave a follow up meeting with Sunita and asked the following questions to find out if Sunita is able to use the mala chakra method correctly or not:
  - Are Sunita and her husband satisfied or not with the mala chakra method?
  - Are Sunita and her husband having success using condoms or abstaining on white bead days?
  - Does Sunita's period come on time? (between the dark brown bead and returning to the red bead.)
2. Ms. Asha looked at the calendar and looked at the mala chakra to see if the black band was on the correct bead or not.
3. Ms. Asha then asked Sunita to explain the mala chakra method one time again to see if she was using the method correctly.

# Main Information for the Mala Chakra Method

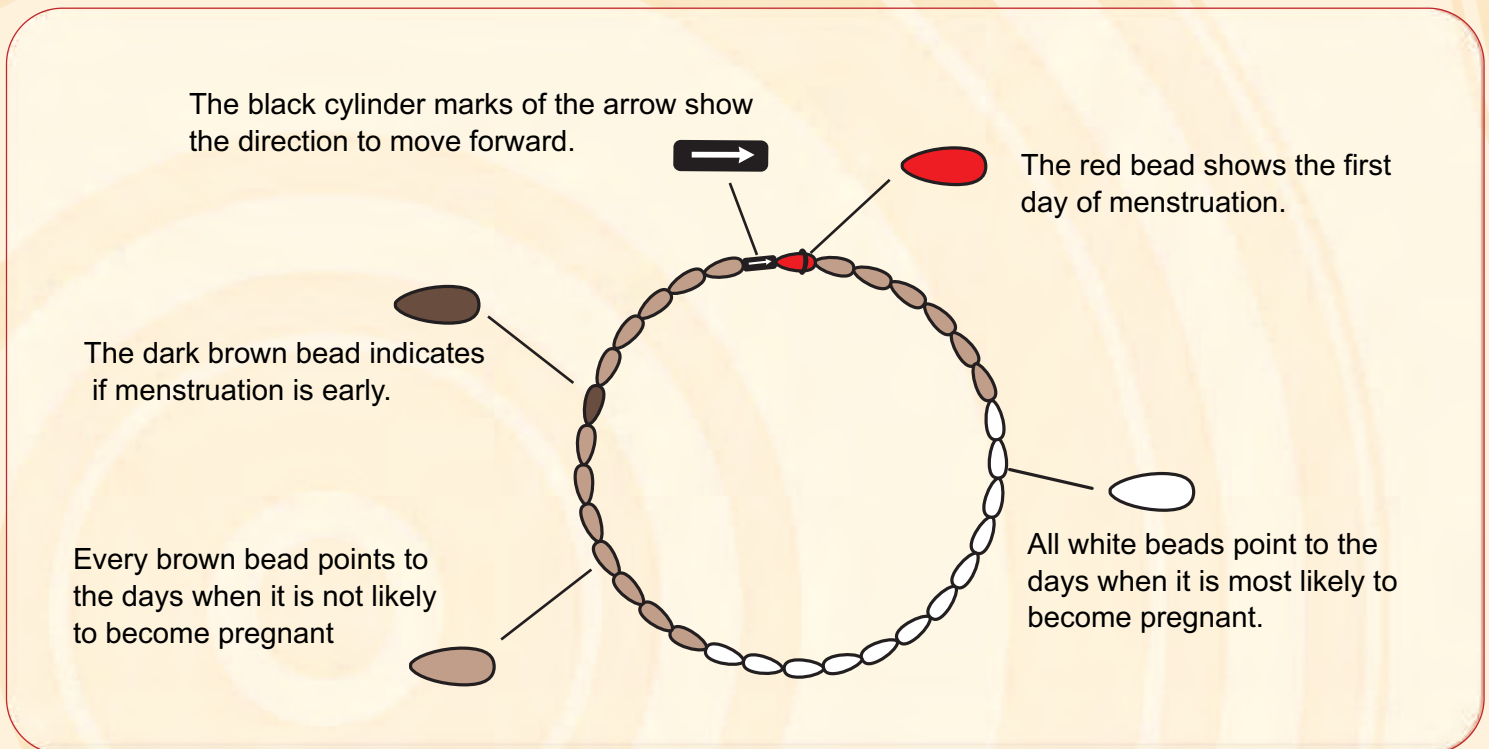
**Q.** What is the mala chakra method?

**A.** A natural, easy, and effective method of family planning. There are no side effects on the body.

**Q.** What do the colored beads of the mala chakra indicate?

**A.**

- Every bead of the mala chakra represents one day of a woman's menstrual cycle.
- With these beads it is possible to identify the days of the woman's menstrual cycle when she is most likely to become pregnant.



**Q.** Who can use the mala chakra method?


**A.**

- Those women whose periods come about a month apart can use the mala chakra method.
- Those couples who are able to use condoms or abstinence on white bead (pregnancy) days can use the mala chakra method.

**The mala chakra method does not protect against sexually transmitted diseases or HIV/AIDS.**




## Part 6: LAM Method: Natural Contraceptive Method for Breastfeeding Women




"Congratulations Shyama. So your Lakshmi has come. How are you both?"

"Thank you, Sister. We are both well. Gudiya is breastfeeding well."



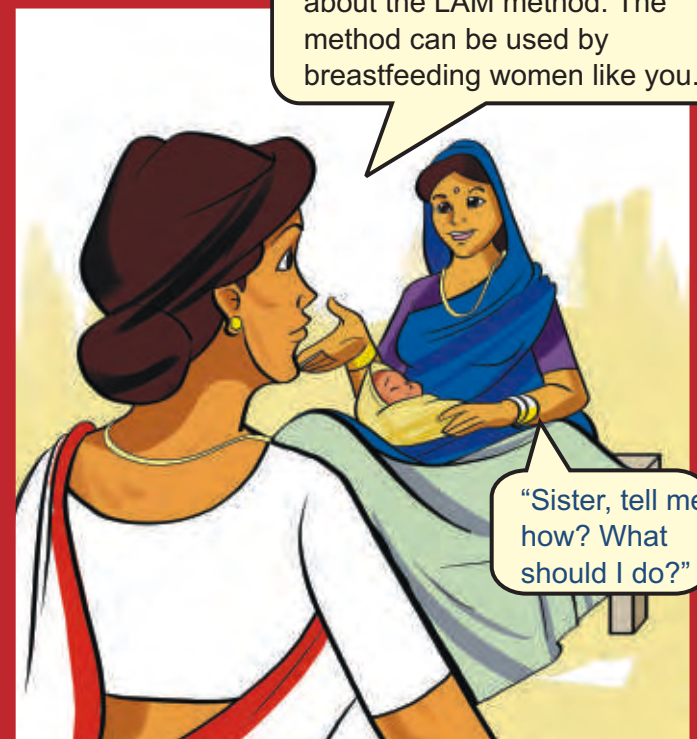
"Very good Shyama. Keep breast feeding Gudiya. Do not give her any other food or water until she is over 6 months old."

"Yes Sister. Certainly I will remember what you've explained to me, and I still do not want to become pregnant again for a few years."




"Shyama you are intelligent. Have you talked to your husband about adopting family planning?"

"Yes. We both do not want another child for 2-3 years and were thinking about using a natural method."



"Shyama, then you can learn about the LAM method. The method can be used by breastfeeding women like you."

"Sister, tell me how? What should I do?"



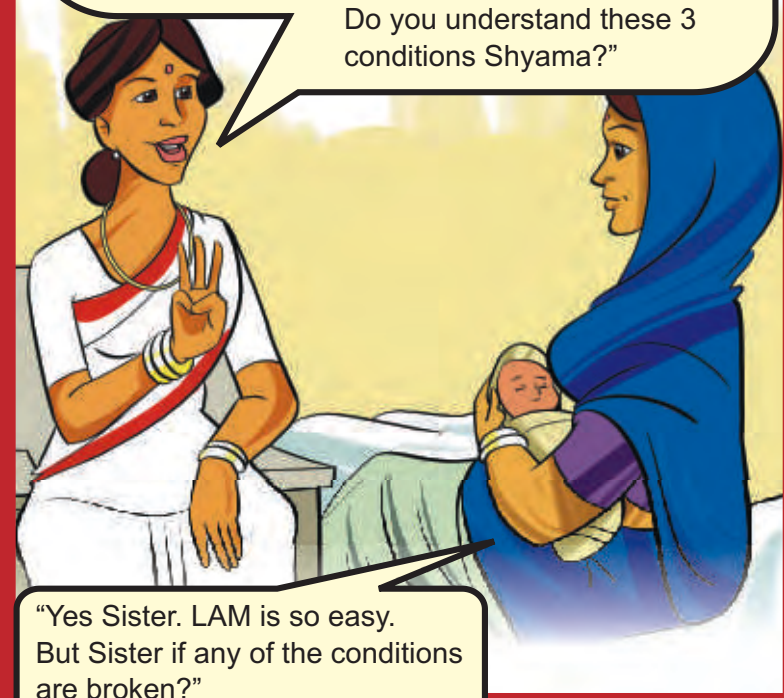
"Shyama the LAM method is one easy and effective way. There are 3 essential conditions for this method."

"What are the conditions?"


"Listen carefully Shyama. Here are the 3 conditions:

1. Your period has not returned since giving birth.
2. For 6 months you will only breast feed Gudiya. You do not give her any other food, liquid, or water).
3. Gudiya must be less than 6 months old. The woman who fulfills these preconditions can use the LAM method.

Do you understand these 3 conditions Shyama?"



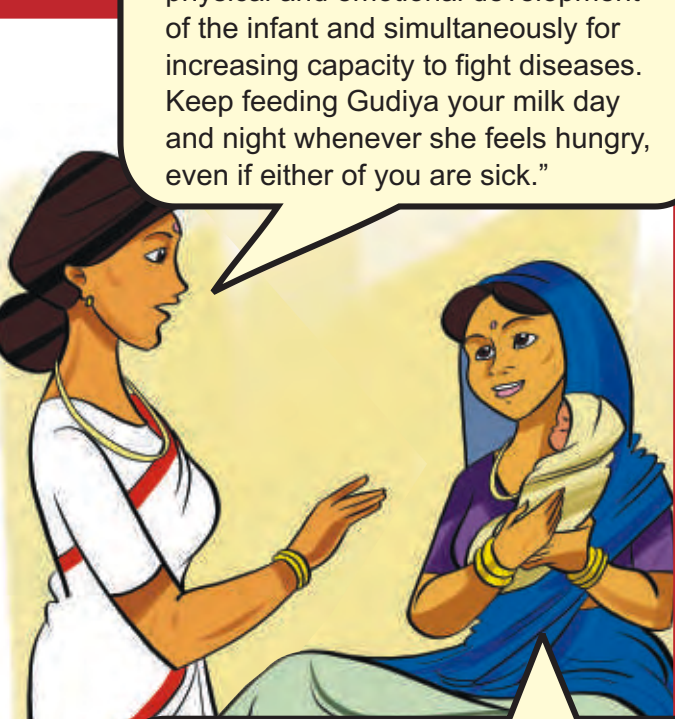
"Yes Sister. LAM is so easy. But Sister if any of the conditions are broken?"




"Yes, Shyama. If any one of the conditions is broken the LAM method is no longer effective and you may have to switch to a different method."

"Currently I satisfy all three of the conditions. I will now try the LAM method."





"Yes, Shyama this method will be very useful for you and also Gudiya. Breastfeeding is very important for the physical and emotional development of the infant and simultaneously for increasing capacity to fight diseases. Keep feeding Gudiya your milk day and night whenever she feels hungry, even if either of you are sick."




"Sure Shyama. Only when Gudiya is two years old should you have your next pregnancy, and please remember to keep breastfeeding Gudiya and definitely give her immunization shots."

"Yes Sister. Thank you."

"Yes Sister I understand. I will give Gudiya only my milk until she is 6 months old. If one of the three conditions is broken, I will immediately start a different method, or I will come see you."

## Main Points

- 
1. Ms. Asha gave suggestions for Shyama to space her pregnancies. This is necessary for the health of the mother and child.
  2. The LAM method is an easy and effective method for breastfeeding women.
  3. To use this method 3 conditions are necessary:
    - The mother's period has not returned since giving birth.
    - The mother only breastfeeds the child until he/she is 6 months old. No other food, liquids, or water should be given..
    - The child must be less than 6 months old.
  4. If one of the 3 conditions is broken, the woman needs to start another contraceptive method immediately.
  5. After the LAM method, contact the health worker to learn which method to use.

# Key Information for the LAM Method

**Q.** What is the LAM method?

**A.** The LAM method is one natural method of family planning for breastfeeding women.

**Q.** What are the three conditions for the LAM method?

**A.** If breastfeeding women fulfill these three conditions then the LAM method can help prevent pregnancy.

- The mother's period has not returned since giving birth.
- The woman only breastfeeds her child (no food, liquid or water should be given).
- The child must be less than 6 months old.

**Q.** What should the women do if one of the 3 conditions is broken?

**A.** If any one of the 3 conditions is broken, the woman should immediately begin to use another family planning method. For more information she should contact her health worker.



For more information related to the mala chakra method and LAM method, contact:

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