



Birth spacing

It Takes a Village: Giving our babies the best chance



Utah Department of
Health & Human Services
Health Equity

What is birth spacing?

“The amount of time between the birth of one baby and the beginning of the next pregnancy.”¹



Did you know?

- 42% of Pacific Islander pregnancies are spaced 18 months apart or less.²



Ancient or modern? Science or culture?

- Health professionals recommend mothers wait 18 months after birth to begin another pregnancy to allow their bodies to fully recuperate.¹
- Our Pacific Islander culture and history actually teaches us that our ancestors already knew this was a good practice.



Birth spacing is cultural

- Samoan mothers waited “at least two years between the birth of each child.”³
- Hawaiian mothers stopped breastfeeding when their child was able to pick up and throw a stone, 18–20 months.⁴
- It was universal practice in the Pacific Islands for a husband and wife to abstain during the 1–2 years that a child was being nursed.



Birth spacing is cultural

- In the Pacific, the spacing of the planting time of crops in the *fonua* or *fanua* (land) was a common cultural practice, which allowed the *fonua* or *fanua* (land) to recover.⁵
- Birth spacing gives a mother the opportunity to recover and develop and strengthen her *fonua* or *fanua* (placenta, womb, and nurturing environment).



Birth spacing is cultural

- Birth spacing gives mothers the opportunity to invest quality time with their new baby.
- This develops and strengthens the *kaliloa* or *'aliloa* or her influence on the child throughout the child's life.



References

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