OBJECTIVE: To examine characteristics of U.S. women that are associated with use of long-acting reversible contraception and changes in these characteristics between 2002 and 2006–2008.

METHODS: We analyzed data from two nationally representative samples of women aged 15–44 in the National Survey of Family Growth, including 7,643 women in 2002 and 7,356 women in 2006–2008. We conducted simple and multinomial logistic regression analyses to identify demographic and reproductive health characteristics associated with use of long-acting reversible contraception.

RESULTS: Long-acting reversible contraception (intrauterine devices and sub-dermal implants) use among U.S. women using contraception increased from 2.4% in 2002 to 5.6% in 2006–2008. The largest increases in long-acting reversible contraception use during this time occurred among the youngest and oldest age groups, non-Hispanic white and non-Hispanic African American women, foreign-born women, and those in the highest income group. High prevalence of long-acting reversible contraception use in 2006–2008 was seen among women who had given birth once or twice (10%), foreign-born women (8.8%), and Hispanic women (8.4%). After adjusting for key demographic and reproductive health characteristics, in comparison with users of other contraceptive methods and with those not using contraception who were at risk for unintended pregnancy, foreign-born women and women who experienced coitarche before age 18 were approximately twice as likely to be using long-acting reversible contraception as women without those characteristics.

CONCLUSION: A more diverse population of women used long-acting reversible contraception in 2006–2008 compared with 2002. However, there is likely more potential for increased uptake, especially among populations historically not considered to be candidates for these methods.