

# CDC'S WORK TO SUPPORT & PROMOTE BREASTFEEDING IN HOSPITALS, WORKSITES, & COMMUNITIES

## THE PROBLEM

# 1 IN 4

Only 1 in 4 infants is exclusively breastfed as recommended by the time they are 6 months old.

Low rates of breastfeeding add more than **\$3 billion** a year to medical costs for the mother and child in the United States.



More than three quarters (77%) of Black infants are ever breastfed, which is below the national average of 83%.



## BREASTFEEDING IS AN INVESTMENT IN HEALTH, NOT JUST A LIFESTYLE DECISION

### BENEFITS FOR INFANTS

Infants who are breastfed have reduced risks of:

- Asthma
- Obesity
- Type 1 diabetes
- Severe lower respiratory disease
- Acute otitis media (ear infections)
- Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).
- Gastrointestinal infections (diarrhea/vomiting)
- Necrotizing enterocolitis (NEC) for preterm infants



### BENEFITS FOR MOTHERS

Breastfeeding can help lower a mother's risk of:

- High blood pressure
- Type 2 diabetes
- Ovarian cancer
- Breast cancer

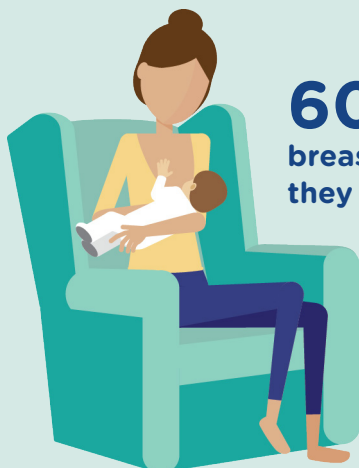


*Breastfeeding provides unmatched health benefits for babies and mothers. It is the clinical gold standard for infant feeding and nutrition, with breast milk uniquely tailored to meet the health needs of a growing baby. We must do more to create supportive and safe environments for mothers who choose to breastfeed.*

**Dr. Ruth Petersen, Director of CDC's Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity**

## MOTHERS NEED SUPPORT THROUGHOUT THEIR BREASTFEEDING JOURNEY

**60%** of mothers stop breastfeeding sooner than they planned.



Certain factors make the difference in whether and how long babies are breastfed:

- Hospital practices
- Education and encouragement
- Policies or supports in the workplace
- Access to community supports

## CDC IS INCREASING BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT FOR MOTHERS ACROSS THE NATION



### We collect data to learn how best to improve breastfeeding rates in the United States by:

- Tracking how long infants are breastfed.
- Creating reports that show how well states and hospitals support breastfeeding mothers.



### We promote best practices in health care settings by:

- Supporting the Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding, a global standard to promote breastfeeding in hospitals.
- Encouraging obstetricians, pediatricians, and nurses to educate new moms about breastfeeding.



### We support mothers at work and in their communities by:

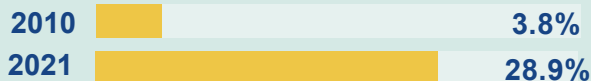
- Partnering with states to help employers support breastfeeding mothers with places to pump and store breast milk, flexible work hours, and maternity leave benefits.
- Promoting access to community supports like peer counseling and supplemental nutrition programs.

## WE ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The percentage of babies who start out breastfeeding increased from 73% in 2004 to 83% in 2020.



In the United States, the percentage of births in hospitals with recommended maternity care practices that support breastfeeding increased from 3.8% in 2010 to 28.9% in 2021.



“Given the importance of breastfeeding on the health of mothers and children, it is critical that we take action to support breastfeeding. Women who choose to breastfeed face numerous barriers—only through the support of family, communities, clinicians, healthcare systems, and employers will we be able to make breastfeeding the easy choice.”

**Jerome M. Adams, MD, MPH**  
U.S. Surgeon General (2017-2021)

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U.S. Department of  
Health and Human Services  
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Control and Prevention

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT:**  
Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity  
[www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao)  
[www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/about-breastfeeding](http://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/about-breastfeeding)