

Postpartum Considerations (to Six Months)



At birth, 90% of babies are breastfed, including almost 70% of babies who are exclusively breastfed.



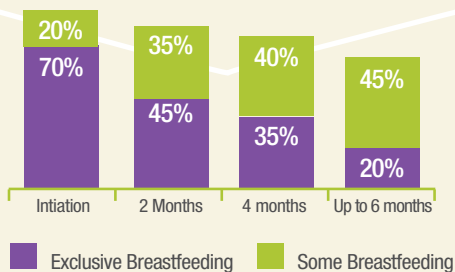
Providing parents with infant feeding education, counselling and support can improve breastfeeding rates.



Health care providers and organizations have an important role supporting parents to breastfeeding exclusively to six months and continue breastfeeding beyond six months.

Between birth and two months:

- The number of parents who breastfed exclusively drops significantly in the first few weeks after birth
- The main reasons why parents stop breastfeeding are:
 - Perceived insufficient breastmilk supply
 - Baby unable to latch/not breastfeeding well.



EDUCATION AND COUNSELLING



90% of new parents are aware of community programs and services to help with feeding their baby

JUST OVER
1 in 3 babies
are fed solid foods earlier than recommended



- Most babies do not require solid foods until six months of age
- Most parents who introduced solids early reported that a health care professional advised them to do so
- Babies being fed only infant formula are more likely to receive solid foods earlier than six months.



THREE WAYS HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

1

Assess parents for *barriers and risk factors* that may impact how long they continue breastfeeding.

2

Provide tailored education, counselling and support, e.g.:

- Support parents to feed their babies and make informed decisions
- Teach hand expression to all parents
- Encourage skin-to-skin contact and breastfeeding during painful procedures
- Promote introduction of solids at about 6 months.

3

Refer parents to Health Connection for breastfeeding supports, *postnatal classes/programs* and 211 for community social supports

UP TO 6 MONTHS

65% of babies continue to breastfeed
AND
20% of babies continue to breastfeed exclusively

SUPPLEMENTATION



ALMOST
1 in 3 babies

are fed infant formula in hospital

Breastfeeding babies fed infant formula in hospital are less likely to be breastfed at two, four and up to six months

SOME PARENTS MAY NEED EXTRA SUPPORT

Some parents may need extra support to continue breastfeeding exclusively if they:

- Are a first time parent
- Delivered their baby by c-section
- Gave birth preterm
- Are under 25 years of age or older than 34 years of age
- Live with an annual family income below \$60,000.

Factors that influence how parents feed their babies often have underlying social and economic influences.



TWO WAYS HEALTH CARE ORGANIZATIONS CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

1

Create an organizational environment supportive of breastfeeding

- Provide infant feeding education for all employees
- Implement policies that support breastfeeding
- Work towards Baby-Friendly Initiative designation.

2

Collaborate with community partners to:

- Ensure parents receive consistent information to make informed decisions
- Understand and address factors affecting breastfeeding rates
- Protect, promote and support breastfeeding.