

# Breastfeeding

## Definition

*Breastfeeding initiation* is the number and percent of babies who were being breastfed at hospital discharge.

## Data in context

Breastfeeding provides the best nutrition for infants and is associated with many positive outcomes for both baby and mother. Babies who are breastfed have fewer ear and respiratory infections, are at less risk for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome and obesity, and score higher on cognitive development tests than non-breastfed babies.<sup>1</sup> Women who breastfeed have decreased postpartum bleeding, increased time between pregnancies, lower risk of osteoporosis, earlier return to pre-pregnancy weight, and decreased risk of breast cancer.<sup>2</sup>

While the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends breastfeeding if possible, there are many societal and institutional barriers to both initiation and continuation of breastfeeding.<sup>3</sup> Health care settings often have policies that create barriers, such as early hospital discharge, lack of timely routine follow-up and postpartum home visits, lack of guidance and encouragement from health care professionals, promotion of infant formula through distribution of hospital discharge packs, and coupons for free or discounted formula. New families may also face societal obstacles including absence of workplace facilities and support for breastfeeding and media portrayal of bottle feeding as the norm.<sup>4</sup>

Kentucky has the second lowest rate in the nation of babies who were ever breastfed and the third lowest rate of babies breastfeeding at six months of age.<sup>5</sup> Despite the proven health benefits of breastfeeding initiation and continuation through the baby's first year of life, only about half of all newborns in Kentucky are being breastfed upon discharge from the hospital after birth. Kentucky's rate did improve from 48 percent in 2004 to 52 percent in 2006.

Numerous factors, such as family beliefs, professional advice, and birthing facility practices, lead to disparities in breastfeeding rates.<sup>6</sup> Nationally, breastfeeding rates increased substantially among non-Hispanic Black infants from 36 percent in 1993–1994 to 65 percent in 2005–2006, yet the

rate in Kentucky remains lower than that of White and Hispanic infants.<sup>7,8</sup> From 1999–2006, national breastfeeding rates also differed by income, with 74 percent of infants from higher income families being breastfed compared to 57 percent of infants from lower income families.<sup>9</sup>

Breastfeeding initiation rates for Kentucky counties range from 19 percent to 74 percent in 2006. Breastfeeding initiation was highest in Anderson, Fayette, Oldham, and Woodford Counties where more than 2 in 3 babies were breastfed. The counties with the lowest rates were Knott and Martin Counties.

The Kentucky Department of Public Health has developed a set of state and local strategies to increase breastfeeding that support the national priorities outlined in the Healthy People 2010 initiative.<sup>10</sup>

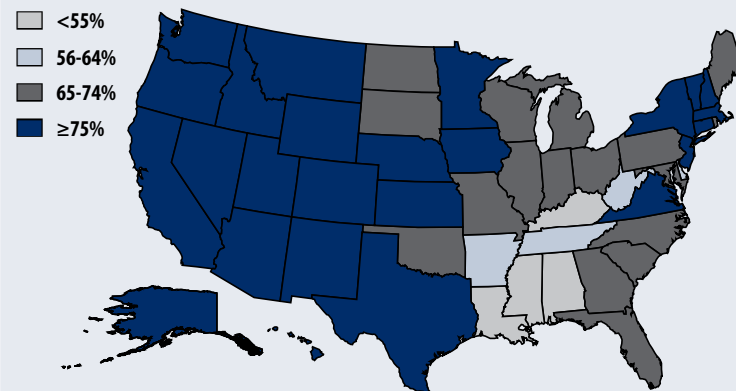
Health care professionals can increase breastfeeding education and support to mothers before and after delivery.<sup>11</sup> Hospitals can develop a written breastfeeding policy and ensure all staff know how to implement it, offer the support of skilled lactation consultants, and stop the practice of handing out commercial infant formula.<sup>12,13</sup> Communities can develop breastfeeding peer networks, increase the number of lactation consultants in communities by offering continuing education to local health department staff, use the federal Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program to promote breastfeeding, and encourage the creation of family friendly work environments that allow women to breastfeed or pump at the workplace.<sup>14</sup>

**Data Source:** Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services, processed by Kentucky Population Research at the University of Louisville Urban Studies Institute.

**Data Note:** Data are reported by mother's place of residence, not infant's place of birth. Data from 2006 are preliminary and exclude births to Kentucky mothers that occurred in Ohio. For cases where the information for this variable was missing, the case was excluded from the total number of live births.

**Rate Calculation:** (number of babies breastfed at hospital discharge in 2004 \* 100) / (total number of live births in 2004) (number of babies breastfed at hospital discharge in 2006 \* 100) / (total number of live births in 2006)

Percent of Children Ever Breastfed by State among Children Born in 2005



Source: Provisional data from National Immunization Survey, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Department of Health and Human Services.

- 1 Gartner, L.M., Morton, J., Lawrence, R.A., Naylor, A.J., O'Hare, D., Schanler, R.J., Eidelman, A.I., and the American Academy of Pediatrics Section on Breastfeeding (2005). "Breastfeeding and the Use of Human Milk." *Pediatrics*, vol. 115, no. 2. Elk Grove, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics.
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2008). *Breastfeeding Report Card – United States, 2008*. Available at <http://www.cdc.gov>. Accessed August 2008.
- 6 McCarter-Spaulding, D. (2007). "Black Women's Experience of Breastfeeding: A Focus Group's Perspective." *Journal of Multicultural Nursing & Health*. Chautauqua, NY: Riley Publications, Inc.
- 7 Data obtained from the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services, September 2008, processed by Kentucky Population Research at the University of Louisville Urban Studies Institute.
- 8 McDowell M., Wang, C., and Kennedy-Stephenson, J. (2008). "Breastfeeding in the United States: Findings from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Surveys 1999–2006." *NCHS Data Brief*, no 5. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics.
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services, Department for Public Health. *Healthy Kentuckians 2010*. Available at <http://www.chfs.ky.gov/dph/hk2010.htm>. Accessed August 2008.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 UNICEF (2008). *The Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative. Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding*. Available at [http://www.unicef.org/nutrition/index\\_24806.html](http://www.unicef.org/nutrition/index_24806.html). Accessed September 2008.
- 14 Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services, Department for Public Health. *Healthy Kentuckians 2010*. Available at <http://www.chfs.ky.gov/dph/hk2010.htm>. Accessed August 2008.

## Breastfeeding initiation (number of babies being breastfed at hospital discharge & percent of all live births)

	2004		2006	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Kentucky	26,905	48	29,172	52
Adair	78	39	93	43
Allen	107	53	138	55
Anderson	160	65	191	67
Ballard	46	46	27	47
Barren	273	49	270	55
Bath	54	35	46	29
Bell	119	31	125	32
Boone	870	52	895	66
Bourbon	139	54	140	52
Boyd	245	42	264	42
Boyle	144	47	177	51
Bracken	41	32	41	37
Breathitt	52	31	54	25
Breckinridge	114	46	109	47
Bullitt	382	54	429	56
Butler	66	38	68	41
Caldwell	47	38	59	40
Calloway	195	61	228	63
Campbell	402	35	434	49
Carlisle	28	45	35	57
Carroll	58	35	54	40
Carter	107	31	151	40
Casey	86	43	99	55
Christian	508	38	596	53
Clark	222	50	239	50
Clay	63	23	69	23
Clinton	38	30	50	37
Crittenden	59	62	60	51
Cumberland	24	34	29	34
Daviess	645	48	732	53
Edmonson	52	42	56	47
Elliott	21	27	29	32
Estill	82	40	78	43
Fayette	2,801	72	2,878	72
Fleming	75	40	79	43
Floyd	152	27	154	27
Franklin	380	61	407	64
Fulton	33	37	34	39
Gallatin	63	41	60	42
Garrard	88	53	113	58

	2004		2006	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Grant	160	41	186	46
Graves	247	52	264	53
Grayson	135	40	141	43
Green	61	49	52	43
Greenup	153	35	183	52
Hancock	54	45	43	44
Hardin	808	54	880	56
Harlan	99	26	91	21
Harrison	111	49	123	52
Hart	128	52	121	54
Henderson	173	27	140	23
Henry	110	54	114	58
Hickman	25	50	21	46
Hopkins	272	45	293	48
Jackson	57	30	70	37
Jefferson	5,566	57	6,158	62
Jessamine	363	62	466	65
Johnson	97	34	110	34
Kenton	1,002	43	1,060	54
Knott	35	20	38	19
Knox	167	31	179	34
LaRue	89	59	106	60
Laurel	319	43	346	43
Lawrence	42	20	67	31
Lee	24	31	26	34
Leslie	45	30	37	29
Letcher	99	29	69	21
Lewis	26	14	31	36
Lincoln	158	44	165	47
Livingston	32	35	57	51
Logan	167	45	197	55
Lyon	32	59	32	46
McCracken	387	46	416	50
McCreary	65	25	76	33
McLean	47	39	51	42
Madison	552	55	639	58
Magoffin	49	27	55	28
Marion	112	45	121	47
Marshall	167	51	170	57
Martin	27	16	32	20
Mason	79	39	97	37

	2004		2006	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Meade	122	54	111	43
Menifee	21	28	25	35
Mercer	142	50	148	60
Metcalfe	49	39	54	44
Monroe	67	42	57	42
Montgomery	152	44	185	46
Morgan	68	40	53	34
Muhlenberg	162	43	179	46
Nelson	277	47	307	52
Nicholas	30	29	25	30
Ohio	167	49	176	49
Oldham	378	68	402	74
Owen	55	44	70	52
Owsley	18	26	12	21
Pendleton	87	45	73	48
Perry	113	27	82	21
Pike	221	29	250	32
Powell	69	36	67	35
Pulaski	340	45	340	45
Robertson	9	53	7	39
Rockcastle	96	42	78	42
Rowan	92	43	141	49
Russell	69	32	88	44
Scott	380	60	400	60
Shelby	308	58	336	56
Simpson	84	41	101	46
Spencer	121	60	116	62
Taylor	126	46	155	50
Todd	101	51	104	58
Trigg	83	57	76	54
Trimble	37	31	39	47
Union	41	25	61	29
Warren	738	55	892	60
Washington	72	51	84	56
Wayne	102	38	65	28
Webster	72	36	85	45
Whitley	153	38	189	40
Wolfe	37	31	35	27
Woodford	186	68	191	68