

Breastfeeding

DEFINITION

Breastfeeding is the number and percentage of newborn infants who are breastfed at the time of hospital discharge.

SIGNIFICANCE

Breastfeeding is widely recognized as the ideal method of feeding and nurturing infants and a critical component in achieving optimal infant and child health, growth, and development.^{1,2} National health experts recommend exclusive breastfeeding for six months after birth, continuous breastfeeding for at least 12 months after birth, and thereafter as long as mutually desired by mother and child.³

Breastfeeding decreases infant mortality and morbidity. Infant benefits include optimal nutrition and reduced risk for sudden infant death syndrome, infectious disease, and chronic conditions such as childhood obesity, type 1 and 2 diabetes, and otitis media. Breastfeeding benefits mothers by creating a strong bond with infants and decreasing risk for postpartum depression, type 2 diabetes, and hypertension. Breastfeeding provides significant social and economic benefits, including reduced cost to the family, reduced health care costs, and reduced employee absenteeism.^{4,5,6}

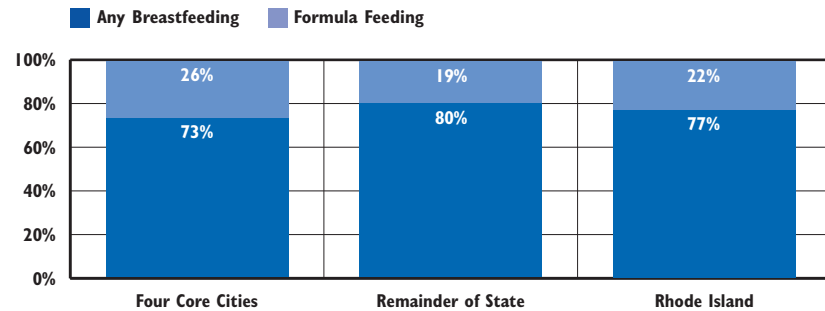
Breastfeeding can be effectively promoted by hospital and other birth

facility policies and practices that take place before, during, and after labor and delivery, including access to professional lactation consultants, and involvement in mother-to-mother lactation support networks.⁷ In 2015, Women & Infants Hospital became the second-largest hospital in the U.S. to achieve the “Baby-Friendly” designation, which recognizes breastfeeding support and promotion by birth facilities. Rhode Island ranks best in the U.S. in the percentage of babies born at Baby-Friendly hospitals.⁸

Breastfeeding rates generally increase with maternal age, higher educational attainment, and higher income levels.⁹ Whether or not the pregnancy was intentional or not also affects rate of breastfeeding. In Rhode Island between 2012-2015, 10% of babies from intended pregnancies were not breastfed at all, compared with 16% of babies from unintended pregnancies.¹⁰

Healthy People 2020 sets target breastfeeding rates of 82% of infants ever having been breastfed, 61% at six months of age, and 34% at one year of age.¹¹ Among babies born in the U.S. in 2013, 81% were ever breastfed, 52% were breastfed at six months, and 31% were breastfed at 12 months. In 2013, Rhode Island exceeded national rates in all three, reporting 82% of infants ever having been breastfed, 56% at six months, and 37% at one year of age.¹²

Breastfeeding and Formula Feeding, Rhode Island, 2012-2016*

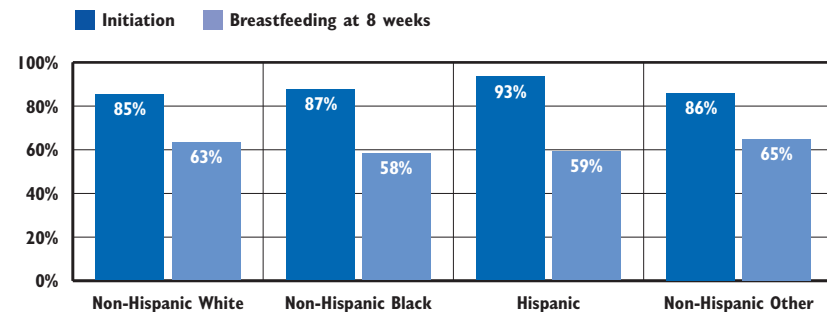


Source: Rhode Island Department of Health, Center for Health Data and Analysis, Newborn Developmental Risk Screening Program, 2012-2016. Breastfeeding and formula feeding are defined as intended feeding method at hospital discharge. Totals may not sum to 100% because data on feeding methods were not available for all births.

*Note: The data collection process at the Rhode Island Department of Health was changed in 2015. Prior to 2015, breastfeeding was recorded as “Breast”, “Bottle”, or “Both”. Since 2015, a “Yes” or “No” question on the birth certificate worksheet “Is the infant being breastfed at discharge?” has been used. Data from and prior to 2015 for “Exclusive breastfeeding” and “Both breast and formula” have been combined into the “Any breastfeeding” category to align with current data collection practices.

◆ Between 2012 and 2016, 77% of new mothers in Rhode Island indicated that they intended to breastfeed when discharged from the hospital, 22% intended to formula feed.¹³ Nearly nine out of ten (87%) new mothers in Rhode Island who were surveyed about three months after giving birth between 2012-2015 reported ever having breastfed. Forty-six percent reported continued breastfeeding at the time of the survey.¹⁴

Breastfeeding Initiation and at Eight Weeks, Rhode Island, 2014



Source: Rhode Island Department of Health, Division of Family Health, Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS), 2014.

Rhode Island Supports for Breastfeeding

◆ Rhode Island is one of 45 states with legislation that provides mothers with the explicit right to breastfeed in public places.¹⁵ Since 2015, Rhode Island law has prohibited job discrimination based on pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions and requires employers to make reasonable accommodations for workers for conditions related to pregnancy and childbirth, including breastfeeding.¹⁶

◆ In 2014, Rhode Island became the first state in the U.S. to establish licensure for International Board Certified Lactation Consultants (IBCLCs). State-certified and trained lactation consultants provide comprehensive lactation support and counseling for pregnant and postpartum women. In 2016, Rhode Island had 55 IBCLCs.^{17,18}

◆ Rhode Island is one of four states that have established paid family leave programs, which can support breastfeeding initiation and duration. U.S. mothers who have 12 or more weeks of paid maternity leave are nearly three times more likely to initiate breastfeeding and twice as likely to breastfeed for six or more months when compared to mothers with no paid leave.¹⁹

Table 22. Breastfeeding at Time of Birth, Rhode Island, 2012-2016

CITY/TOWN	NUMBER OF BIRTHS SCREENED	NUMBER ANY BREASTFEEDING	PERCENT ANY BREASTFEEDING
Barrington	526	486	92%
Bristol	682	542	79%
Burrillville	605	459	76%
Central Falls	1,580	1,152	73%
Charlestown	232	192	83%
Coventry	1,454	1,128	78%
Cranston	3,873	3,060	79%
Cumberland	1,550	1,273	82%
East Greenwich	573	495	86%
East Providence	2,297	1,745	76%
Exeter	243	206	85%
Foster	163	145	89%
Glocester	324	259	80%
Hopkinton	287	244	85%
Jamestown	111	107	96%
Johnston	1,309	977	75%
Lincoln	942	756	80%
Little Compton	60	50	83%
Middletown	761	644	85%
Narragansett	318	275	86%
New Shoreham	55	48	87%
Newport	1,188	943	79%
North Kingstown	1,072	910	85%
North Providence	1,600	1,207	75%
North Smithfield	403	331	82%
Pawtucket	4,686	3,477	74%
Portsmouth	529	465	88%
Providence	12,231	8,960	73%
Richmond	307	265	86%
Scituate	389	323	83%
Smithfield	623	509	82%
South Kingstown	915	793	87%
Tiverton	349	291	83%
Warren	408	316	77%
Warwick	3,760	2,940	78%
West Greenwich	215	173	80%
West Warwick	1,710	1,195	70%
Westerly	781	645	83%
Woonsocket	2,687	1,814	68%
Four Core Cities	21,184	15,403	73%
Remainder of State	30,614	24,397	80%
Rhode Island	51,798	39,800	77%

Sources of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Department of Health, Center for Health Data and Analysis, Newborn Developmental Risk Screening Program Database and Maternal and Child Health Database, 2012-2016.

Breastfeeding is defined as “breastfeeding as intended feeding method at hospital discharge.” “Percent With Any Breastfeeding” includes infants fed breast milk in combination with formula and those exclusively breastfed.

The number of births screened may differ from the total number of births reported elsewhere in the Factbook as not all documented births received a screening. Births to Rhode Island women that occurred outside Rhode Island are not included.

Core cities are Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket.

References

- ^{1,3} American Academy of Pediatrics. (2012). Policy statement: Breastfeeding and the use of human milk. *Pediatrics*, 129(3), 827-841.
- ^{2,15,17} *Breastfeeding: 2015-2020 Rhode Island strategic plan*. (2015). Providence, RI: Rhode Island Department of Health.
- ⁴ Kavanaugh, K. & Lessen, R. (2015). Position of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics: Promoting and supporting breastfeeding. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, 115, 444-449.
- ^{5,9} *Breastfeeding*. (2016). Washington, DC: Child Trends.
- ^{6,19} The Center for Law and Social Policy. (August, 2016). *Public policies to support breastfeeding: Paid family leave and workplace lactation accommodations*. Retrieved January 20, 2017, from www.clasp.org
- ^{7,12} *Breastfeeding report card – United States, 2016*. (2016). Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- ⁸ Women & Infants Hospital. (2015). *Women & Infants achieves baby-friendly designation* [Press release]. Retrieved February 9, 2018, from www.womenandinfants.org
- ¹⁰ *Issue brief: Unintended pregnancy among women in Rhode Island, 2009-2011*. (2015). Providence, RI: Rhode Island Department of Health.

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