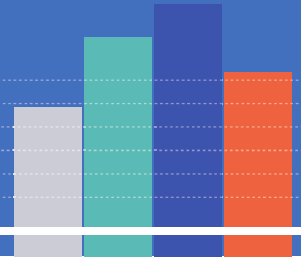




Department of  
Public Health  
Thomas Farley, MD, MPH  
Commissioner

# CHART



## Breastfeeding Among Mothers in Philadelphia

For most infants, breast milk is the best source of nutrition. Infants who are breastfed have a lower risk of asthma, obesity, type 1 diabetes, ear, respiratory and gastrointestinal infections, and sudden infant death syndrome. Breastfeeding can also reduce mothers' risk of hypertension, type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease and stroke, and ovarian and breast cancers.<sup>1</sup> The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that infants receive only breastmilk until 6 months of age and that breastfeeding continues after other foods are introduced until at least 12 months of age.<sup>2</sup> While most mothers do initiate breastfeeding after birth, for various reasons, most stop breastfeeding before reaching these milestones.

The Pennsylvania Vital Statistics system collects data on all births in the state, including demographics, pregnancy risk factors, and preterm birth. The Philadelphia Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PhillyPRAMS) is a survey given to randomly selected mothers two to six months after giving birth. The survey asks about their behaviors and experiences before pregnancy and after birth in order to understand why some babies are born healthy and others are not. This issue of CHART uses both Pennsylvania Vital Statistics and PhillyPRAMS data to summarize breastfeeding patterns among mothers in Philadelphia.

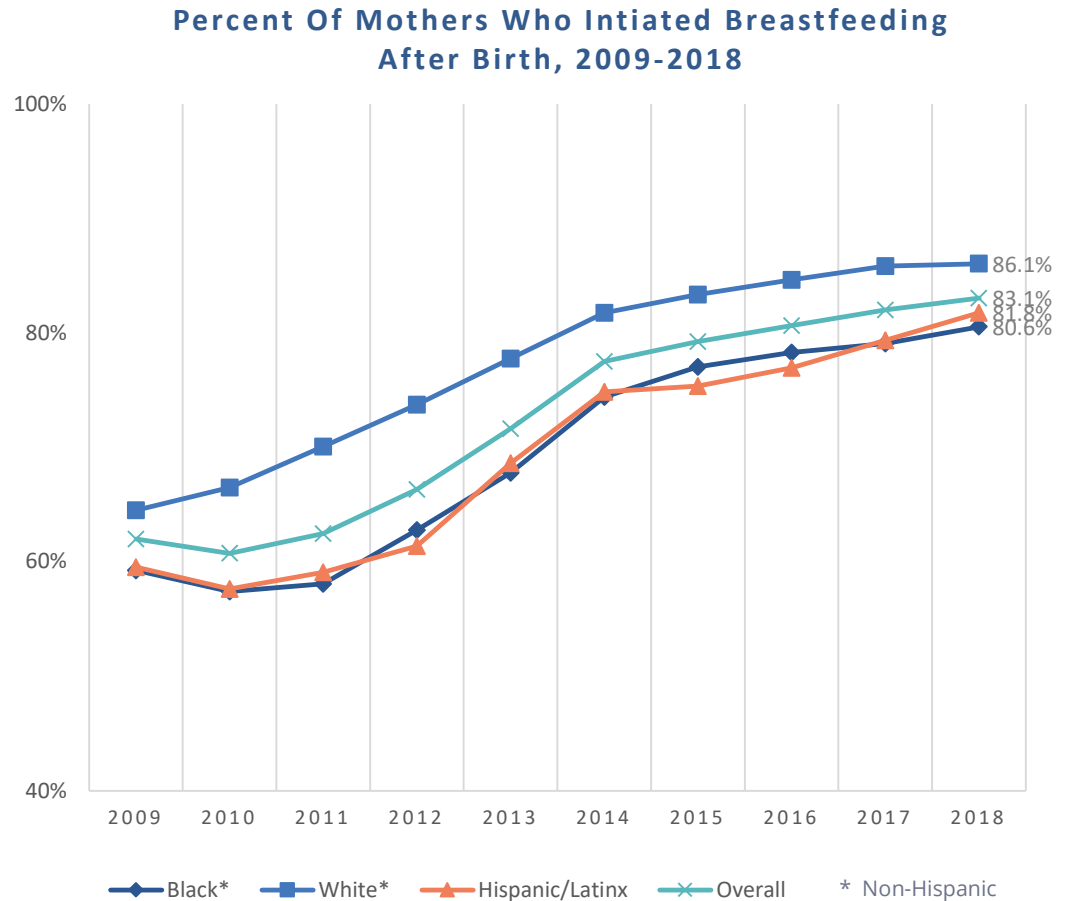
### KEY TAKEAWAYS

Philadelphia breastfeeding initiation rates have increased over the past decade.

Breastfeeding rates decline after birth & Black and Hispanic mothers were less likely to be breastfeeding at 8 weeks postpartum than White mothers.

The most commonly reported reason given for stopping breastfeeding is insufficient milk supply.

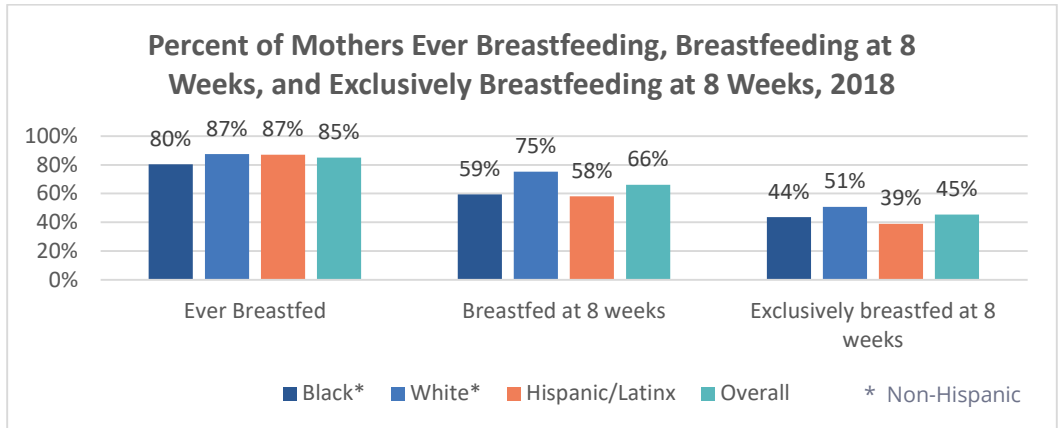
Breastfeeding initiation has increased over the past decade.



- The percent of mothers who initiated breastfeeding after birth has increased from 62% to 83% between 2009 and 2018.
- The breastfeeding initiation rate was lower in Black and Hispanic/Latinx women as compared to White women but increased similarly over time across all races/ethnicities

Source: 2009-2018 Pennsylvania Vital Statistics

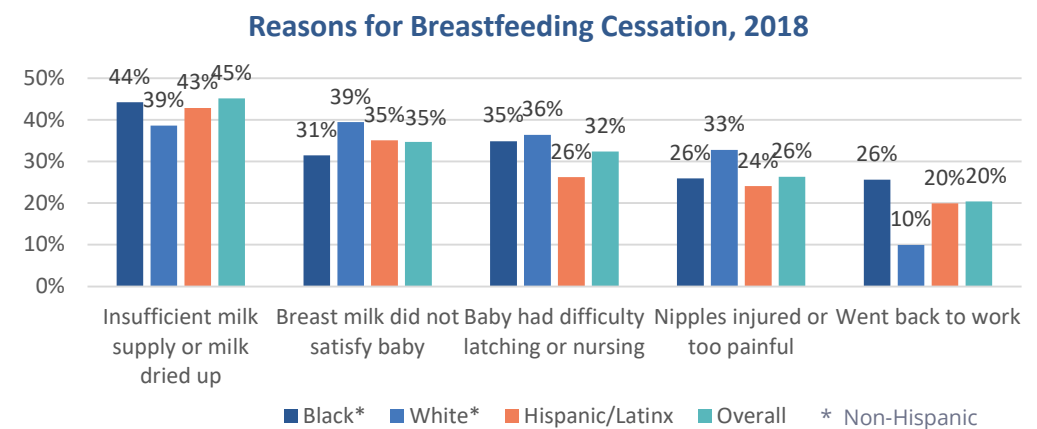
## Breastfeeding rates decline by 8 weeks postpartum



- Most mothers (85%) surveyed in PhillyPRAMS reported breastfeeding for some period after giving birth.
- Overall, breastfeeding rates dropped by nearly a quarter 8 weeks after birth. The magnitude of this decline varied by mother’s race/ethnicity; while breastfeeding rates were an estimated 33% lower at 8 weeks among Hispanic/Latinx mothers, they were only 14% lower among White, non-Hispanic mothers.
- Less than half of infants were estimated to be exclusively breastfed at 8 weeks of age. Rates were similar across races/ethnicities.

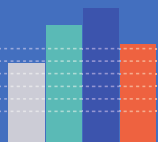
Source: 2018 Philadelphia Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System

## Many women stop breastfeeding because of reported problems with milk supply



- The most common reason mothers gave for stopping breastfeeding was that they believed that they were not producing enough milk or their milk dried up. Many mothers also said that they did not produce enough breast milk to satisfy their babies’ hunger.
- Overall, an estimated 1 in 5 women stopped breastfeeding because they returned to work. Non-Hispanic Black and Hispanic mothers were 2 and 2.5 times more likely, respectively, to give this reason than non-Hispanic White mothers.

Source: 2018 Philadelphia Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System



## WHAT CAN BE DONE

### The Health Department is:

- Providing free, in-person help from certified, experienced lactation service providers in-home and at City health centers
  - Facilitating a weekly Feeding and Parenting support group
  - Providing free, 24/7 on-demand “tele-lactation” support through the app Pacify
  - Sponsoring a 20-hour interdisciplinary breastfeeding management course for health care workers and a nine-week Breastfeeding Basics course for community workers
  - Celebrating positive representations of Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) breastfeeding through public health messaging campaigns
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### Health care providers should:

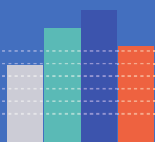
- Discuss with families the importance and benefits of breastfeeding for their babies and themselves.
- Provide families with guidance on infant cues and responsive feeding patterns
- Ensure continuity of breastfeeding support and care following discharge from the hospital
- Refer mothers to lactation support services, especially when formula is being introduced as a supplement
- Work to increase the racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of lactation service providers

### Medicaid managed care organizations should:

- Reimburse in-home lactation support
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### People can:

- Provide practical support to breastfeeding mothers including bringing her food or water, doing household chores, or caring for older children.
  - Support breastfeeding women who return to work by following the Reasonable Accommodation Ordinance that requires employers to provide a private, sanitary space and the necessary time to express breast milk.
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## REFERENCES

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2019). About Breastfeeding. Retrieved from: <https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/about-breastfeeding/index.html>
2. American Academy of Pediatrics Section on Breastfeeding. (2012). Breastfeeding and the Use of Human Milk. *Pediatrics*, 129(3):e827-841. 2011-3552.

## RESOURCES

### PA Department of Health "Healthy Baby Line":

1-800-986-BABY (2229)

### La Leche League:

Greater Philadelphia HELPLINE  
610-666-0359

[www.llofeasternpa.org](http://www.llofeasternpa.org)

### Pacify App

Download the Pacify app for Apple or Android devices — available in English or Spanish versions. Enter the enrollment code **PHILLY** at signup for free 24/7 access.

<https://www.pacify.com/pdph/>

### Women, Infants, & Children (WIC) Program:

215-978-6100

[www.northwic.org](http://www.northwic.org)

### Philadelphia Department of Health:

Breastfeeding and Returning to  
Work

<https://www.phila.gov/media/20181004110730/Breastfeeding-and-returning-to-work.pdf>

### The Pennsylvania Breastfeeding Resource Organization for Lactation Consultants:

Philadelphia Region  
Breastfeeding Resource  
Directory

[https://www.phila.gov/media/20200312104424/Breastfeeding-Resource-Directory\\_2020.pdf](https://www.phila.gov/media/20200312104424/Breastfeeding-Resource-Directory_2020.pdf)

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