

About the Data – Breastfeeding Initiation

Indicator Description

In-hospital breastfeeding initiation is defined as receiving any breastmilk during the period between delivery and time of newborn screening specimen collection. Two indicators are displayed: (1) Any in-hospital breastfeeding initiation; and (2) Exclusive in-hospital breastfeeding initiation.

Data Sources

California Department of Public Health, Center for Family Health, Genetic Disease Screening Program, Newborn Screening Data, 2010–2022.

Data Analysis

In-hospital breastfeeding initiation data are collected via the California Newborn Screening Program. Infant feeding information is recorded when the newborn screening specimen (blood) is collected, usually within 24 to 48 hours of birth.

All nonmilitary hospitals providing maternity services are required to complete the Newborn Screening Test Form. Upon completing the form, staff must select from the following four categories to describe “all feeding since birth”: (1) Only Human Milk; (2) Only Formula; (3) Human Milk & Formula; (4) NPO (nothing by mouth).

Denominators for the state and county dashboards are based on all live births to California resident mothers/parents giving birth. Denominators for the hospital tables are based on all live births in California hospitals regardless of maternal residence.

The case inclusion/exclusion rules are as follows:

- The numerator for any in-hospital breastfeeding initiation includes records marked “Only Human Milk” or “Human Milk & Formula.”
- The numerator for exclusive in-hospital breastfeeding initiation includes records marked “Only Human Milk.”
- The denominator excludes cases with unknown method of feeding; cases marked NPO; those receiving total parenteral nutrition (TPN) at time of specimen collection; and infants who were in a neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) nursery at the time of specimen collection.
- The hospital tables exclude cases that were not collected by facilities listed as 'Kaiser' and/or 'Regular' maternity hospitals in the newborn screening database.

Each percent displayed is the number of oral-feeding, non-NICU infants receiving any and/or exclusive breastmilk divided by the total number of oral-feeding, non-NICU infants.

The 95% confidence interval presented in the tooltips indicates there is a 95% chance that the range contains the true prevalence or rate in the population. Rates or percentages with wide confidence intervals should be interpreted with caution. The state dashboard uses single year data; the county dashboard uses three-year aggregated data.

Data Suppression

The numerator, rate and confidence interval are not shown when the numerator is less than 10.

Category and Subcategory Definitions

Asian subgroup: Data are presented only for those who reported at least one of the following Asian race groups: Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Cambodian, Laotian, Vietnamese, Filipino, Southeast Asian, and Asian Indian. The Multi-Ethnic Asian race group includes those who reported more than one Asian race group; all other data are for those who reported a single Asian race group.

Birthweight: Weight of the infant at time of delivery, reported in grams. Excludes birthweights less than 227 grams, greater than 8165 grams and records with unknown birthweight.

Geography: State and county dashboards are based on county of maternal residence at time of delivery. Hospital tables are based on county of birth occurrence (hospital location) at time of delivery.

Race/ethnicity: Hispanic includes all persons of Hispanic origin of any race, including Other and Unknown race. Multi-Race includes those of non-Hispanic origin who reported more than one race. The remaining groups are of non-Hispanic origin who reported a single race: American Indian or Alaska Native (AIAN), Asian, Black, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (Pacific Islander), White, Other, or Unknown. Other and Unknown race are not shown on the dashboards but are available in the downloadable data table.

Suggested Citation

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