



## Indicators for Breastfeeding Initiation During the Hospital Stay Among Florida Women, 2000-2001

Hospital staff play an important role in whether or not new mothers breastfeed their newborns. Initiating breastfeeding during the postpartum hospital stay is highly correlated with whether or not the new mother is told by hospital staff to breastfeed on demand. Other factors, such as race/ethnicity and level of education, have significant, yet smaller effects on the initiation of breastfeeding in the hospital. This report identifies factors associated with the hospital staff's encouragement of breastfeeding.

According to Florida PRAMS 2000 and 2001 survey data, among new mothers in Florida who were told by hospital staff to breastfeed their newborns on demand, nine out of 10 (90.3 percent) initiated breastfeeding while in the hospital. The prevalence of being told by hospital staff to breastfeed on demand among women in Florida was:

- The lowest among non-Hispanic Black women (51.0 percent); 66.4 percent among Hispanic women, and 63.2 percent among non-Hispanic White women.
- The highest among women age 25 and older (64.6 percent); 53.0 percent among women age 19 and younger, and 57.4 percent among women age 20 to 24.
- The highest among women with more than a high school education (69.4 percent); 56.3 percent among those with a high school education, and 51.5 percent among those with less than a high school education.
- The highest among women with household incomes over \$39,600 (73.3 percent); 60.6 percent among women with annual household incomes between \$15,601 and \$39,600; 55.5 percent among those with incomes of \$15,600 or less.
- Higher among non-Medicaid recipients (67.5 percent) than among Medicaid recipients (52.6 percent).
- Higher among married women (66.5 percent) than among those who were not married (52.3 percent).
- Higher among first-time mothers (65.7 percent) than among those with previous live births (58.1 percent).
- Higher among normal birth weight births (62.7 percent) than among low birth weight births (43.6 percent).
- Higher among full-term births (62.7 percent) than among pre-term births (48.1 percent).
- Higher among women with intended pregnancies (65.5 percent) than among those with unintended pregnancies (57.1 percent).

This study underscores the importance of the healthcare provider's advice to new mothers to breastfeed. The data indicate there is room for improvement. In particular, being told by hospital staff to breastfeed on demand is less likely to occur among women who are non-Hispanic Blacks, are under the age of 25, are Medicaid recipients, are unmarried, have had previous live births, have lower levels of education or household income, have pre-term pregnancies, have unintended pregnancies, and/or give birth to low birth weight infants. These findings may assist healthcare providers and program planners in Florida to provide effective information for increasing the prevalence of breastfeeding initiation during the postpartum hospital stay among new mothers.

The Florida Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) is a random survey of recent mothers of live-born infants. It is designed to monitor the physical, economic, and social health of Florida mothers and newborns. PRAMS data are "weighted" so that the resulting estimates can be generalized to the entire state population. PRAMS data from 2000 and 2001 were combined to increase sample size and precision of estimates for this study.

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